

RUSSIAN
CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE,
IN THE YEAR 1814.

MAP Theatre of War 1814.



Thos. Hutchinson

1854

HISTORY

OF THE

CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE,

IN THE YEAR 1814.

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

OF

A. MIKHAILOFSKY-DANILEFSKY.

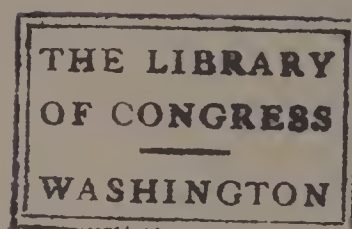
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Plans and Maps of the Operations of the Army.

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NOTICE.

THE original Work, from which the present volume has been translated, was published in St. Petersburg during the latter part of the year 1836. The Author, a well-known Russian General, is now a Member of the Imperial Senate.

During the eventful campaign of 1814, he served as Aide-de-camp to the Emperor Alexander, and was constantly at His Majesty's head-quarters, where he was employed in wielding both the sword and the pen.

Although the Translator has not the pleasure of being personally acquainted with the Author, yet he had ample opportunities of learning, from other distinguished Russian officers, who were high in command during the war in France, their very favourable opinion of the merits of his work, both for its accuracy and impartiality.

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RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

IN

FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

General view of the Campaign—Position of Affairs on the Opening of the Campaign of 1814—The Designs of the Emperor Alexander—Condition of the Allies—The Allied Forces—State of the French Army—The Russian Forces—Conduct and Views of the Emperor Alexander.

RUSSIA had already celebrated, before the beginning of the year 1814, the anniversary of her deliverance from foreign invasion, with the appointed religious solemnities and public rejoicings. The grass had again waved green on the fields of Borodino, Tarootino, and Krasnoy, and, from the Moskva to the Niemen, towns and villages had risen from their ashes. Our country had revived with a fresh and vigorous life, and our sovereign, the acknowledged liberator of Europe, was at the head of his victorious legions on the banks of the Rhine. Austria, Prussia, the German Princes, Holland, Spain and Portugal, had thrown off the yoke of Napoleon, who was now engaged in negotiating with the Pope and Ferdinand VII. the terms of their re-establishment on their respective

thrones. His near relation, the King of Naples, was only waiting for a favourable moment to take up arms against him. England having renewed her friendly relations with the continental powers, the flags of all nations were again unfurled on seas, on which, during the long period of ten years, not even the peaceful merchantman had ventured to set a sail. To ensure the general tranquillity of nations, there needed but to place an insurmountable barrier to the ambition of Napoleon, and that could only be done by crossing the frontiers of France.

The campaign of 1814 ought not to be considered as a new war, but simply as the continuation of the campaign of 1813, which the Emperor Alexander had opened single-handed, and in which he was afterwards joined by the other powers, in the hope of regaining their independence. The victory of Leipsic brought the Allies to the Rhine, but did not put an end to the war. The negotiations at Frankfort failed of success, for this plain reason,—that neither side brought any thing like sincerity to the discussion. Alexander warmly insisted on the necessity of continuing the contest, and exerted himself to infuse the same spirit into his allies, some of whom were satisfied with seeing the French driven out of Germany, and pretended that the object of the treaties of offence and defence had been gained, and that Napoleon, forced across the Rhine, was no longer in a condition to trouble the peace of Europe. The Emperor at last succeeded in bringing over the Allies to his opinion, and in getting them to adopt the plan of operations which he had traced; in short, it was finally resolved to invade France, and by penetrating into the heart of that country, to oblige

Napoleon to accept of such terms as should re-establish and secure the political balance of Europe.

Napoleon was still the recognised ruler of France, and it is certain that at this time the Cabinets had not the slightest idea of wresting the sceptre from his grasp, and of handing it over to the representative of the Bourbons, who was residing in England as a private gentleman. On the occurrence of any important event, the latter would take occasion to remind the Allies, by letter, of his right to inherit the throne of his ancestors, and when they approached the Rhine, he requested them to proclaim his legitimate authority; but no attention was paid to his wishes. His brother, the Count d'Artois, with his two sons, was now on the point of leaving London for the Continent, in order to be nearer to the theatre of war, but not one of the allied monarchs entered into treaty with the Bourbons, or flattered them with promises. Yet in the bosom of him, who was the soul of the Alliance, there already lurked the intention of dispossessing Napoleon,—an intention, which though not manifested by any overt act, was no secret to two or three persons, who enjoyed his confidence. Still a sharp-sighted observer might, in some measure, guess the colour of his thoughts from the following maxim, which Alexander, as he drew near the frontiers of France, and indeed during the whole course of the war in that country, frequently repeated, both verbally and in writing, and to which he steadily adhered: “We should make the march of political arrangements depend on the success of our arms, and not fetter ourselves with any premature engagements; we should look to victory for the most advantageous conditions of a general peace.”

Napoleon's reflections had led him to precisely the same conclusion, and he acted accordingly. He was not shaken by the successive blows which had annihilated his armies in Russia and Germany. He bore his defeats with firmness, and, on his return from Leipsic, gave his exclusive attention to the assembling of fresh troops, to oppose the general armament against him. He used the utmost activity in the formation of his armies, and tried, by every means, to render the war national. In neither of these attempts, however, was he cordially seconded by the wishes of France, where all ranks were calling out for peace. The reflection of that military glory, with which Napoleon had dazzled France, was now felt to be a feeble compensation for the decay of agriculture and manufactures, the stagnation of trade, the conscription, the loss of husbands and fathers, and heavy taxes. But Napoleon heeded the voice of his suffering people as little as he did the counsels of his friends and the representatives of those public functionaries, who, after years of silence, now ventured to speak out their sentiments on the ruined condition of the empire, and the absolute necessity of peace. The child of victory turned a deaf ear to their respectful remonstrances, and told his advisers that he could not sit on a throne whose lustre was tarnished, nor wear a crown which was shorn of its glory. Inveighing against despondency, he exerted himself to rekindle the warlike ardour of the nation, and to rouse the spirits of his troops to a contest in which he hoped to regain the glory he had lost, and consequently that preponderance in the affairs of Europe which he had once enjoyed. In these circumstances, reconciliation was far off; indeed it was equally

distant from the thoughts of Alexander and of Napoleon.

While the allied armies were preparing to cross the Rhine, the Duke of Wellington was opposed to Marshal Soult on the south-west frontier of France; and, on the Mincio, Field Marshal Bellegarde was in the field against the Viceroy of Italy; Count Benningsen was under the walls of Hamburg, which were defended by Marshal Davoust; the Hereditary Prince of Sweden had opened the campaign against the Danes, now the only allies of Napoleon; and some Prussian detachments were besieging Magdeburg, Glogau, Cüstrin and two citadels, still occupied by the French in Germany. Almost at one and the same time the war raged in the heart of France, at the mouths of the Elbe, at the foot of the Pyrenees, and on the plains of Lombardy; but the decisive blow was struck on the banks of the Marne, the Aine, the Aube and the Seine, where the shock took place between the armies in the presence of the Allied Sovereigns and Napoleon.

It was here that an end was put to a long and bloody struggle, and that the fate of the vanquished was decided; for the successes of Wellington in the south of France, of Bellegarde in Italy, and of Benningsen at Hamburg, could not have produced the desired result, if Napoleon had triumphed over those armies against which he fought in person, and whose movements and combats we are now about to relate.

During this campaign, as in that of the preceding year, the forces of the allied Powers were divided into three armies, and remained under the orders of the same commanders-in-chief, who had led them to victory in Germany. The Grand Army, with which the

Sovereigns were present, was commanded by Prince Schwarzenburg, the army of Silesia by Field Marshal Blücher, and that of the north, by the Crown Prince of Sweden. His Royal Highness, however, owing to the tardy march of the negotiations with the Danes, was late in reaching France, halted at Liege, and took no share in the campaign. Thus Schwarzenburg and Blücher alone entered the lists with Napoleon.

The three allied armies, destined to invade France, were formed in the following manner. The grand army consisted of six corps of infantry, with a small number of cavalry attached to each. The first three corps were Austrian, under the command of Count Colloredo, Prince Lichtenstein, and Count Giulay; the fourth, consisting of Wirtembergers, was commanded by their Hereditary Prince; the fifth, of Bavarians, by Count Wrédé; and the sixth, of Russians, by Count Witgenstein.

Besides these six corps, there were two unattached divisions of Austrian infantry. The reserve of the Grand Army was divided between the Austrians and Russians. Of the former, there were three divisions of grenadiers and two of cuirassiers, under the command of the Hereditary Prince of Hesse Homburg. The Russian part of the reserve, commanded by Count Barclay de Tolly, consisted also of horse and foot. Count Milorádovitch had the infantry, consisting of the third or grenadier corps of Count Lambert, and the guards or fifth of Yermólof. There were two divisions in each of these two corps; but to the guards was also attached a brigade of the Prusso-Baden guards, composed of eight battalions, and eight squadrons. The cavalry of the reserve, under the orders of Prince

Galitzin, was formed of three divisions of cuirassiers, and the light-horse division of the guards. In addition to these we must reckon the Cossacks, under the command of their Ataman, Count Platoff, consisting of twenty-six regiments, of which some were attached to the different corps and others to independent detachments.

In the Grand Army, exclusive of the Cossacks, there were present under arms :—

Russians	{ Count Witgenstein	20,569
	{ Reserve	32,839
Austrians		130,000
Prussians		7,100
Bavarians		25,000
Wirtembergers		14,000
Badeners		1000
Total		230,508

men, with 680 pieces of cannon.

To this army also belonged three corps of the troops of the German Princes, amounting to 30,000 ; but of these, the corps of Prince Philip of Hesse Homburg alone came up and shared in the affairs which took place near Lyons in the month of February.

In the army of Silesia there were two corps of Russians and two of Prussians viz. :—

Count Langeron's	27,017
Baron Sacken's	26,566
General York's	18,931
General Kleist's	20,000
Total	92,514

men, with 436 pieces of cannon.

Two corps of the German Confederation were destined to form part of this army, but neither of them crossed the Rhine. One of them consisted of the troops of the Princes of Hesse, and the other was under the command of the Prince of Coburg: both together amounted to 44,000 men.

The army of the north consisted of	
The Russian corps of Baron Wintzengerode	35,237
The Russian corps of Bülow	30,000
The troops of the reigning princes of Germany under the command of the Duke of Weimar	25,000
Total	<hr/> 90,237

To these are to be added the following troops, of which only a very small number took part in the war: some of them did not even cross the Rhine:—

Swedish army	20,000
Mixed corps of Count Walmoden	15,000
Corps of Germans under the command of the Duke of Brunswick	30,000
Troops of the Netherlands	10,000
British	9,000

The grand total of the troops, destined to cross the Rhine, thus amounted to upwards of four hundred thousand men. The number of troops which France was able to oppose to the invaders is uncertain, owing to the wide difference in the accounts of the French writers on this subject. Yet, from their own showing, and judging by what we ourselves saw, we are fairly warranted to conclude, that the army with which Napoleon opened the campaign in person, in the

middle of January, amounted to a hundred and twenty thousand men. Of course we do not include in this number—the army of the Viceroy in Lombardy, and that of Marshal Soult on the Spanish frontiers—the independent corps of Augereau at Lyons, and that of Maison at Antwerp—the National Guard, which took part in several engagements—or the garrisons of the numerous fortresses on the frontiers of France, to blockade which, the Allies were obliged to leave behind them large detachments and even entire corps. In the course of the campaign, the ranks of the French army were filled up with more than 50,000 men, partly drawn from Spain, and partly from the recruiting depots in the western provinces of France, whither the Allies did not penetrate, and where the conscription went on without interruption. But although Napoleon's troops were less numerous than those of his opponents, he had, in other respects, many advantages over the Allies. He was in the centre of his empire, where he was still blindly obeyed, and could avail himself of all its resources for the supply of men, arms, ammunition, and provisions. Fighting in a country, whose inhabitants were on his side, he had always at command thousands of carts for the conveyance of his troops, and a host of spies to give him notice of the movements of the Allies. Granaries and cellars, which were carefully concealed from us, were freely opened on the approach of the French, who were thus readily supplied with bread and wine; their wounded or exhausted soldiers too, every where found shelter and assistance under the roofs of their countrymen.

Very different was the condition of the allied armies, which had no magazines with them, nor assured com-

munication with the right bank of the Rhine. They poured into a hostile country in severe winter weather, paying no attention to Napoleon's widely circulated proclamations calling on the people to take up arms, nor to those numerous fortresses in their rear, which are so thickly planted along the northern and eastern frontiers of France. We had to struggle not with the enemy's troops alone, but with hardships caused chiefly by the want of provisions; an embarrassment which it was the more difficult to relieve, because the arrangements, made by the respective commanders of the Allies, often clashed with each other. Time was wasted in written correspondence, complaints, and reproaches, while the soldier remained without food. The sick and the stragglers were despatched by the armed peasants concealed in the woods and hollows, from which they issued, especially in the month of February, and falling upon our small parties and couriers, interrupted the communications between the armies, and even between the corps. Still more hurtful was the submission of the allied armies to the influence of certain Cabinets, who frequently differed in opinion, not merely on the score of military operations, but on the very necessity of the war itself. We must farther take into consideration that the Allied generals, who were not placed in immediate and strict subordination to one supreme authority, and who differed as widely from each other, in point of personal qualities, as they did in the degree of their dependence on the Courts, were in many respects inferior to him who was looked upon as the first captain of the age, and who was master of his actions and accountable to nobody. We were indeed superior to the enemy in numbers, and to a

certain extent in equipment; but with us there was not, and, from the very nature of a heterogeneous alliance, could not be, either unity of purpose or of will.

The Russian troops were distributed, as we have already shown, in all the three armies in the field. They consisted of the cavalry of the reserve and six corps of infantry, viz. the guards, the grenadiers and the corps of Witgenstein, Langeron, Sacken, and Wintzengerode. The last four corps had not always attached to them the same number of regular cavalry and Cossacks, and were subdivided into several corps, each consisting of two divisions of infantry, viz. :

Count Witgenstein's Corps.

1st, or Prince Gortchakoff's	} Corps of
2nd, or Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg's	

Count Langeron's Corps.

8th, or Count St. Priest's, afterwards	} Corps of	
Rudzévitch's.....		infantry.
9th, or Olsóofief's		
10th, or Kaptsévitch's.....		

Baron Sacken's Corps.

6th, or Prince Stcherbátov's	} Corps of
11th, or Count Lieven's	

Baron Wintzengerode's Corps.

Count Worontsoff's.....	} Corps of
Count Stróganof's	

The number of Russian troops present in France, with the three allied armies, was thus made up of

1.	The guards, the grenadiers, and the corps of cavalry of the reserve.....	32,839
2.	Corps of Witgenstein	20,569
3.	„ „ Langeron	27,017
4.	„ „ Sacken	26,566
5.	„ „ Wintzengerode.....	35,237

In all..... 142,228

At this time there were two other Russian armies beyond the frontiers; that of Poland, under Benning-
sen, before Hamburg, amounting to about 50,000 men,
and the army of reserve in the Duchy of Warsaw, of
80,000, under the command of Prince Lobánof-Ros-
toffsky. In the course of the campaign, the latter,
more than once, furnished reinforcements to the army
in France. The total number of Prussian troops,
beyond the frontiers, amounted, in the beginning of
1814, to more than 270,000 men.

Count Barclay bore the title of Commander-in-
Chief of the Russian army; but his immediate au-
thority extended only to the Russo-Prussian reserve,
with which he was personally present, and to which he
communicated the orders of the Emperor and the dis-
positions of Prince Schwarzenberg. His influence
over our corps in the main body of the armies in the
field, was confined to a general superintendence of
their equipments and supplies. This was no easy task,
owing to their great distance from home, and conse-
quently, from their resources, as well as to their being
attached to different armies, in which they were placed
under the orders of foreign commanders, who were
under no direct obligation to give themselves much

trouble about their well-being. The want of ammunition and accoutrements was often felt; not because there were none in store, but from the impossibility of bringing them up to the spot where they were wanted. Count Barclay was not present with these corps, and could not know of the instructions and orders given to them without his concurrence. With respect to provisions, the Allies not only gave little help to the Russians, but often showed perfect indifference to their wants.

The four persons who were more immediately attached to the Emperor in the preceding year, and who enjoyed the same share of his confidence in the present campaign, were Count Araktchéieff, Prince Volkonsky, Count Nesselrode, and General Toll. The duty of the first was to keep up the full strength of the regiments, and to have the parks complete. To communicate the Emperor's orders relative to military operations, to Russian or foreign Generals, was the duty of Prince Volkonsky, as head of His Majesty's staff. The diplomatic department remained in the hands of Count Nesselrode, who, as well as Prince Volkonsky, was constantly present with the Emperor. General Toll was always, as in the preceding campaign, at Prince Schwarzenberg's head-quarters, whence he sent regular reports to Prince Volkonsky, who submitted them to His Majesty. He also forwarded the Field-Marshal's orders to our flying parties, and, in cases admitting of no delay, even to the Russian corps in the Grand Army.

While the Emperor confided his troops to the care of foreign commanders, he freely exercised a general influence over both military and diplomatic affairs, and was thus in continual verbal and written

communications with the leading commanders, as well as with the ministers of the courts. In the course of the campaign he reconciled warring opinions, rekindled the ardour of those who were growing cold; and, steadily pursuing his aim—the overthrow of Napoleon—regulated the movements of that mighty, but complicated alliance, which, but for him, would not, it may be safely averred, have been crowned with success. His decided opinion was ever in favour of pushing the war to the last extremity; and he maintained it in spite of the general wish of the foreign cabinets. In rejecting peace, Alexander stood single in the camp of the Allies, as did Napoleon in France. The latter would not stand humbled and disarmed in the eyes of a world, which, but the day before, he had looked on as his own. And thus, like two giants, did the mighty rivals go forth, for the last time, to make trial of their strength. Victory, to be bought alone with the blood of the brave, at length decided the contest!

One of the most remarkable epochs in the lives of these sovereigns is that in which, for the attainment of political ends, each carried the war into the territories of the other. The orders of the day, issued by them to their troops on these memorable occasions, are historical monuments which bear on them a deep impress of the respective characters of their authors. “Soldiers,” said Napoleon, “Russia is carried away by fatality. Her destiny must be accomplished! Can it be that she looks on us as degenerated? Are we not the same warriors who fought at Austerlitz? Let us cross the Niemen and carry the war over the Russian frontier. This war will cover the French arms with glory, and the peace we shall conclude will be solid,

and will put an end to the baneful influence of Russia in the affairs of Europe.”

Let us now listen to the words of Alexander:—
“Warriors! your valour and perseverance have brought you from the Oka to the Rhine. They will carry you farther. We are about to cross the Rhine, and to enter that country, with which we have been waging a bloody and a cruel war. Already have we saved our native country, covered it with glory, and restored freedom and independence to Europe. It remains but to crown these mighty achievements with the long-wished-for peace. May tranquillity be restored to the whole world! May every country enjoy happiness under its own independent laws and government! May religion, language, arts, sciences, and commerce flourish in every land for the general welfare of nations! This, and not the continuance of war and destruction, is our object. Our enemies, by invading the heart of our dominions, wrought us much evil, but dreadful was the retribution: the Divine wrath crushed them! Let us not take example from them: inhumanity and ferocity cannot be pleasing in the eyes of a merciful God. Let us forget what they have done against us. Instead of animosity and revenge, let us approach them with the words of kind feeling, and with the outstretched hand of reconciliation. It is the Russian’s glory to humble an armed enemy; but, once disarmed, to do good both to him and his peaceful countrymen. Such is the lesson taught us by our most holy, orthodox faith; from her divinely inspired lips we hear the command, ‘Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you.’ Warriors! I have the fullest confidence, that, by the moderation of your conduct in the enemy’s

country, you will conquer as often by generosity as by arms ; and that, uniting the valour of the soldier against the armed, with the charity of the christian towards the unarmed, you will crown your exploits by keeping stainless your well-earned reputation of a brave, and a moral people. Thus you will the sooner attain the object of our wishes, a general peace. At the same time, I am well convinced that your commanders will not hesitate to take the severest measures to prevent the possible misconduct of a few among you, from sullyng, to our general grief, the good name you have hitherto so justly enjoyed."

CHAPTER II.

Plan of Military Operations—Positions of the Allied Army—Anecdotes of Field Marshal Blücher—The Allies cross the Rhine—Blücher occupies Coblenz—Captures Nancy—Army of the North—Engagement at Liege—Disposition of the French Forces—First Movements in France.

THE plan of the campaign in France was traced by the Emperor Alexander on the 29th October, 1813, at Frankfort on the Main, four days after his arrival from Leipsic: it is contained in the following letter, then written by his Majesty to the Crown Prince of Sweden.

“Here is the plan proposed by me, and entirely approved of by the Austrian and Prussian Commanders-in-chief. I hope your Royal Highness may find it equally conformable to your ideas. Offensive operations on the part of the Grand Army, between Mentz and Strasburg, offer many difficulties, as we cannot leave the fortresses behind us without observation. By entering France on the side of Switzerland, we meet with incomparably fewer difficulties, that frontier not being so strongly fortified. Another advantage attending this movement, is the possibility of turning the Viceroy’s left wing, and thereby forcing him to a precipitate retreat. In that case, the Austrian army of Italy may advance on Lyons, so

as to form a prolongation of our line, and by means of its left wing, to connect our operations with those of the Duke of Wellington, whose head-quarters are now at Oleron, Soult having retreated to Orthez. In the meantime, Field-marshal Blücher, reinforced by the Bavarians, will form an army of observation of 100,000 men. But, without confining himself to mere observation, he may cross the Rhine near Mannheim, and manœuvre against the enemy till the Grand Army reach the field of action. All the four armies, viz.: the Grand Army, that of Italy, Blücher's, and Wellington's, will stand on one line, in the most fertile part of France. Forming the segment of a circle, the four armies will push forward; and diminishing the arc, will thus draw near its centre, that is, Paris, or to the head-quarters of Napoleon.

“ Your Highness offered to undertake the conquest of Holland. The proposed operations, which I have submitted to you in detail, will enable you to effect your object the more easily, that they will force Napoleon to oppose the bulk of his troops to our armies on the left of the theatre of war. If your Highness will advance on Cologne and Düsseldorf, or from thence in the direction of Antwerp, you will at once separate Holland from France. In that event, should Napoleon resolve to keep possession of the fortresses, the garrisons left in them will materially diminish the effective strength of his armies. On the other hand, should the garrisons be insufficient for their defence, your Highness will have little difficulty in penetrating into Flanders, and perhaps farther. The grand object is, not to lose a moment, that we may not allow Napoleon time to form and discipline an army, and to furnish it with

every thing necessary ; our business being to take advantage of the disorganized state of his forces. I earnestly entreat your Highness not to delay putting your army in motion in furtherance of our general plan of operations.”

The principles laid down in this letter, which, with a few modifications, formed the basis of the campaign, were fully developed by the Commanders-in-chief, in the orders issued by them to the chiefs of corps, and to the heads of the various branches of administration in the armies.

The preliminary movements along the right bank of the Rhine, began towards the end of the year 1813. The Grand Army lay close to Switzerland, and that of Silesia between Manheim and Coblenz. As to that of the north, it was divided into several detachments after the battle of Leipsic. One of these, under the immediate command of the Crown Prince of Sweden, took the field against the Danes ; another, under the command of Count Benningesen, marched against Hamburg ; the corps of Wintzengerode, after detaching several divisions into Holstein, took up its quarters around Bremen ; and General Bülow with his corps turned off to the Netherlands. The deliverance of Holland from the French yoke, by General Benckendorf, was the brilliant commencement of the war. In the middle of December, 1813, and in January, 1814, the allied armies severally began to cross the Rhine at different points, that river which had been so long considered as the insurmountable barrier of France.

The line of operations made choice of for the Grand Army, was the road leading from Basle, between the

Vosges and the Jura, and through Vésoul to Langres ; the latter town having been selected, from its highly advantageous situation in a military point of view, as the general rendezvous. The movements of this army, made up of the troops of six different powers, were complicated. On entering France it was divided into nine columns. The five first consisted of Austrians who had crossed the Rhine in Switzerland, the sixth of Wirtemburgers, the seventh of Bavarians, and the eighth and ninth of a small number of Prussians and Badeniers. The country to the left of Langres was occupied by the Austrians ; that to the right, by the troops of the other five powers. We shall now follow the movements of the columns, beginning at the left wing, and proceeding to the extreme right, commanded by Count Witgenstein.

The *First Column*, that of Count Bubna, marched through Berne and Neufchâtel to Geneva. Having occupied that city, the Count sent detachments into the passes of Mount St. Bernard and the Simplon ; and having thus cut off all communication between France and the north of Italy, where the army of the Viceroy was stationed, he advanced to the neighbourhood of Lyons. Owing, however, to the small number of his troops, he did not enter that populous city, but retired behind the Aisne, and remained there during the month of January. The command of the army, destined to assemble at Lyons, was entrusted to Marshal Augereau, who was waiting, to begin hostilities, for the arrival of the troops, which had been ordered to be sent to him from the army of Marshal Soult, then lying on the Spanish frontier. Count Bubna, too, was expecting reinforcements from the Grand Army and

from Germany. Thus it happened, that the two armies passed the month of January between Geneva and Lyons, in almost complete inaction. Their operations began in February; and they form the subject of a distinct episode, which we shall give in its proper place.

The *Second Column*, Count Giulay's, formed the advanced guard of the Grand Army, and advanced to Langres by the great Paris road through Montbéliard and Vésoul. The *Third*, Count Lichtenstein's, formed the blockade of Besançon; and of the *Fourth*, or Count Colloredo's, one division marched on Langres, and took up a position on Giulay's left wing; while the other, leaving a force sufficient to blockade Auxonne, moved forward through Dijon and Châtillon to Tonnerre and Auxerre. The *Fifth*, the Prince of Hesse Homburg's, consisting of all the Austrian reserves, marched on Dijon and Châtillon. The troops of this column, with the exception of the single division of General Bianchi, who advanced to Langres, remained at Dijon during the whole of the month of January. The *Sixth Column*, commanded by the hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, and the *Seventh* by Count Wrédé, crossed below Huningen and at Basle. The Bavarians formed the blockade of Huningen, BÉfort, Breisach, and Shletstadt, and both columns continued their route, the Prince of Wirtemberg through Epinal, Wrédé through Colmar and St. Dié, and took up their quarters between Nancy and Langres. The *Eighth Column*, or that of Barclay de Tolly, who led the corps of the guards, the grenadier corps, and the first corps of cavalry of the reserve, took the direction of Langres, serving as a reinforcement to Count Giulay, the hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and Count Wrédé.

Finally, the *Ninth Column*, Count Witgenstein's, on the extremity of the right wing, was destined to advance in the interval between the Grand Army and that of Silesia. The passage of the Rhine, by this column, took up more time than was expected, owing to the quantity of ice in the river. Count Witgenstein was the latest of all in crossing: he passed the river at Fort Louis, below Strasburg, but remained for a considerable time near the Rhine with his infantry, in order to watch the garrisons of Strasburg, Landau, and other fortresses, and thus to secure his advance. In the meanwhile, he ordered the advanced guard, under the command of Count Pahlen, to move on to Saverne. Having reached his destination, and being without further orders, the Count requested instructions. The answer he received was; "Continue to advance, keeping to the south." On receipt of this laconic order, Count Pahlen entered the mountains of the Vosges, bombarded Pfalzburg in passing, and advanced on Luneville and Brienne. Count Witgenstein followed the advanced guard with the infantry, at an interval of several marches, taking the direction of Nancy.

In the beginning of January, all the nine columns were in full march in the heart of France, and on the 4th of that month, Count Giulay occupied Langres: the other corps gradually came up in line with him. We must here, however, remark, that the unconnected movements of the Austrians, their excessive dissemination over the wide extent of country between Langres, Lyons, and Geneva, and the numbers required for blockading the fortresses, and the keeping up of garrisons in the towns in our rear, diminished their numbers to such an extent, that of 130,000 Austrians there

remained only 40,000 with the Grand Army in Champagne; in other words, on the scene of action, properly so called. Hence, it follows, that Prince Schwarzenberg had at his immediate disposal not more than 140,000 allied troops; and even from that number there must be deducted 20,000, who were detached and sent to Lyons.

As the Grand Army advanced, it entered into communication with that of Silesia, which, at the close of the year 1813, was stationed between Coblenz and Darmstadt, where it was destined to cross the Rhine, and then to manœuvre in such a way as to be able, in the event of a battle, to unite with the Grand Army. By a supplementary order, Blücher was instructed, as soon as he should have crossed the Rhine, to blockade Mentz, and without much heeding the other fortresses on the Moselle and Meuse, to push forward, without halting, into the interior of France, so as, by the 15th or 20th of January, to join Prince Schwarzenberg, between Arcis, Troyes, and Vitry.

Blücher's arrangements for the new campaign were the sooner completed, that, from the moment of his arrival on the French frontier from Leipsic, he had never ceased insisting that it was not only inexpedient to stop short, but absolutely necessary to prosecute the war. His two months' stay on the Rhine was more than he could well bear, counting, as he did, every day's delay for a day lost. Burning with the desire of avenging the outraged honour of his country, he could think of nothing but the taking of Paris. When the Emperor Alexander left Frankfort for Basle, Blücher transferred his head-quarters to Hechst, and wishing to divert the attention of the French, on the left bank of

the Rhine, from his real purpose, sent abroad reports that the invasion of France would take place on the side of Switzerland, and that he was appointed to pass the winter in Germany in order to keep up a line of observation. He affected to complain of this imaginary inactivity, and people were the more disposed to believe what he said, that all knew the remarkable openness of his nature: hence, nobody suspected the artifice of the frank old man, who had just completed his seventieth year. He even danced on his birth-day, telling his guests that he must now pass much of his time in merry-making, as he was destined never more to listen to the roar of artillery. He even returned from Hechst to Frankfort, busied himself in providing for the wants of his army, which he assured everybody was to remain in cantonments, and, in the meantime, secretly made the necessary preparations for the passage of the Rhine, which he desired to accomplish on the 20th December, that is, on new-year's-day new style. Writing to one of his relations, he said: "At day-break I shall cross the Rhine, but before doing so, I intend, together with my fellow-soldiers, to wash off in the waters of that proud river, every trace of slavery. Then, like free Germans, we will set foot on the frontiers of the great nation, which is now so humble. We shall return as victors, not as vanquished, and our country will hail our arrival with gratitude. How soothing to us will be the moment, when our kinsmen shall meet us with tears of joy!"

On the 14th December, secret orders were sent to the commanders of corps, communicating to each the time and place of crossing. Sacken was ordered to cross near Mannheim, Count Langeron and York at

Caubé, and Count St. Priest at Coblentz. During the night of the 19th December, Sacken's corps, along with which was the king of Prussia, assembled at the spot where the Neckar falls into the Rhine. On the opposite bank was a redoubt which commanded the mouth of the Neckar and the town of Mannheim, and which made it impossible to throw a bridge over the river, while it continued in the enemy's hands. At four o'clock in the morning, a party of Russian light infantry was embarked in boats and on rafts, and was not perceived by the enemy till the boats were within a few yards of the left bank. The French immediately opened a fire of guns and musketry, which was kept up for three quarters of an hour. Thrice the light infantry unsuccessfully attempted to storm the work, but, in a fourth rush, they succeeded in forcing their way into the redoubt and capturing six guns and three hundred men. The king of Prussia came up to the victors, thanked them, and was greeted with loud hurrahs. All this passed in the profound obscurity of a winter night. The rising sun showed the Russians on French ground and lodged in the enemy's redoubt. Strains of martial music, resounding from all the regiments, now filled the air, and the Rhine was soon covered with vessels transporting the troops. By six o'clock in the evening the pontoon bridge was completed, and the whole corps immediately crossed the river.

On this very day Field Marshal Blücher, with Langeron and York, crossed the Rhine at Caubé. At two o'clock in the morning, 200 Prussian light infantry were sent down the Rhine in boats, with orders to make fast to the custom-house on the opposite bank,

and to make the least possible noise, so as not to give the alarm to the French, who had no suspicion of the intended attack. The troops reached the bank in safety. Here the French attacked the Prussians, but the latter being reinforced by detachments which continued to arrive at short intervals, repulsed the enemy. The Prussian advanced guard took possession of the villages on the bank, and at seven o'clock in the evening, when the bridge was thrown over, the corps of Langeron and York crossed the river, and turned off to the left on the road to Mentz.

At the same time Count St. Priest crossed the Rhine at Coblentz, which was occupied by a small detachment of the enemy, defended by a redoubt. In the night of the 19th, the Russian troops were embarked above and below Coblentz. Here too the French had no intimation of their approach, and had hardly time to fire a few shots. The light infantry rushed to the assault, took the redoubt with its four guns, and immediately entered Coblentz, the inhabitants of which illuminated their houses, welcoming the Russians with loud acclamations. In one of the squares the Prefect, on the occupation of Moscow by the French, had erected a monument with the following inscription: "*To the Great Napoleon, in honour of the immortal Campaign of 1812.*"

Colonel Mardenko, who had been appointed Commandant of Coblentz, left the monument untouched, but, under the inscription, caused the following words to be engraved:—"*Seen and approved by us, Russian Commandant of Coblentz in 1813.*"

Having accomplished the passage of the Rhine, Blücher divided his army into two parts: one of them,

consisting of the corps of St. Priest, and Kaptsevitch, under the command of Count Langeron, he left behind, to blockade Mentz and Cassel. Here Count Langeron was to wait for the coming up of the Prince of Coburg with the troops of several of the German Princes, to give up the blockade to him, and then rejoin the army of Silesia. Blücher in person marched forward with the other half of his army, that is, with the corps of York and Sacken, to the latter of which was now attached the corps of Olsoofief. As Marshal Marmont stood opposed on the middle Rhine, to the army of Silesia, and had concentrated his corps at Turckheim, on the road from Manheim to Metz, General Sacken was ordered to advance by that road, and York to manœuvre from Caubé against the enemy's left wing. Marshal Marmont, hard pressed in front and threatened on his left flank, retired behind the Sarre, and made a show, as if he would hinder the army from crossing it: but Blücher having brought forward the pontoons, Marmont, without awaiting the attack, retreated to Metz.

Having driven the enemy beyond the Sarre, Blücher once more divided his army by sending York in pursuit of Marmont, with orders to watch the fortresses of Metz, Thionville and Luxembourg. He himself, with Sacken's corps, marched to Nancy, from whence he sent the following report to the Emperor Alexander:—
“ I think myself happy to be able to lay at Your Majesty's feet the keys of Nancy, the first the Allies have entered of the *good cities* of all France, which have a right to send the Mayor to the coronation of the French monarchs.”

“ I am truly glad,” answered His Majesty, “ that

the glory should have fallen to your lot of taking the first of the *good cities* of old France. By the rapidity of your movements you have acquired new titles to the gratitude of the allied monarchs. You well know how deep an interest I have always taken in your successes, and how agreeable for me it is to repeat to you the expressions of my sentiments.”

On reaching Nancy, Blücher opened a communication with the Grand Army, and then moved forward to Brienne, having directed Prince Stcherbátov to march thither on his right, by the road which passes through Ligny and St. Dizier. On the 14th of January the Field Marshal reached Brienne without interruption, but Prince Stcherbátov came upon the rear-guard of Marshal Victor at Ligny and immediately attacked it. To prevent the enemy from forming, he commanded the regiments of Pskoff and Sophia to storm Ligny by the great road, and two regiments of light infantry to do the same on the left. The artillery, very advantageously placed, cannonaded the town to which the French were hurrying from the environs. Our infantry forced their way into the square, charged with the bayonet and put the enemy to flight. At St. Dizier likewise the French tried to keep us in check, but after a hot affair retreated. Prince Stcherbátov now turned to the left and marched over dreary heaths, where, by the account of the inhabitants, troops had never before been seen, and rejoined the army of Silesia, which had been split into so many detachments. Langeron with St. Priest and Kaptsévitch was still under the walls of Mentz; York was observing Metz, Thionville and Luxembourg; and Kleist, having quitted Erfurt, had only just crossed the Rhine. At

Brienne where warlike operations soon began, Field Marshal Blücher had no other troops with him but the Russians, amounting to about 26,000 men under the command of Sacken and Olsoofief.

At this period, only three corps of the army of the north were ready to take part in the war, the remainder being in Holstein with the Crown Prince of Sweden. Of these three corps, one was commanded by the Duke of Weimar, who had crossed the Rhine at Arnheim; another by Bülow at Antwerp, and a third by Baron Wintzengerode, who was stationed at Düsseldorf with only one-half of his corps. The other half, commanded by Counts Strógonof and Worontzóff, was with the Prince of Sweden, and did not reach France before the month of February. His Royal Highness's stay in Holstein was the cause of these three corps remaining without a commander-in-chief, who might have directed their movements to one common end. It is true, that in the absence of the Crown Prince, the chief command of the troops was entrusted to the Duke of Weimar, as the senior officer; but, in point of fact, his authority was very limited, or, to speak more accurately, imaginary; and this for two reasons. In the first place, because the Emperor Alexander had written to the Duke to act in all things conformably to the arrangements of the Crown Prince, who was at a distance from the theatre of war: and, secondly, because orders were forwarded directly from the headquarters of the allied sovereigns to Wintzengerode and Bülow, who, of course, acted as if they were not under the command of the Duke.

The care of making the necessary preparations for crossing the Rhine had been entrusted, by Baron

Wintzengerode, to the chief of his advanced-guard, Chernishéff, who had every thing in readiness by the first of January. Having reported this to the commander of the corps, he received for answer, that he must wait till the river was clear of ice, when there would be no danger in crossing. It was in vain that he represented the possibility of passing the Rhine, and the necessity of getting speedily into line with the armies in the field. The chief of the corps peremptorily refused his consent, and put off the execution of the Emperor's order till a more favourable season. At last, however, he yielded to pressing entreaties, and gave an order for crossing ; at the same time adding, that, in the event of failure, General Chernishéff must take the responsibility on himself. Having collected boats and rafts, the latter embarked seven hundred light infantry and Cossacks, under the command of Colonel Benkendorf. At ten o'clock in the morning they pushed off from the bank, which was crowned by thirty-six guns, so placed as to play upon the enemy stationed on the opposite bank, on which there were two redoubts. The French, confounded by the audacity of an attempt made in open day, rather than taken by surprise, abandoned their redoubts, retired to some distance, and did not attack the Russians till the latter had crossed the river, and occupied a hamlet on the left bank. The vessels which ferried across Benkendorf having returned to the right bank, seven hundred more troops were embarked, and with these Chernishéff crossed the river in person. The moment he landed he attacked the French and routed them, and having occupied the village of Neissé, proceeded to Aix-la-Chapelle, whither he was followed by the

remaining troops of the advanced-guard, consisting of four battalions of light infantry, the Hulus of Volhynia, two squadrons of hussars, four regiments of Cossacks, and a troop of horse artillery. General Wintzengerode lingered for several days in Düsseldorf without giving a single order to the advanced-guard, which thus remained unsupported in an enemy's country, as if it had been a flying detachment. At length, he began to cross the river with his corps, between Düsseldorf and Cologne, and then, by echelons, followed the advanced-guard, which, moving on without opposition, occupied Liege with the Cossacks on the 12th of January.

These rapid successes at last attracted the attention of Maison, the commander-in-chief of the French troops in the Netherlands. With the view of stopping the progress of the Russians, he detached General Castex with 3,400 foot, 600 horse, and five guns, to drive our troops out of Liege, and to defend the passage of the Meuse. Colonel Benkendorf, who commanded the Cossacks, having received intelligence of the approach of the French, went out to meet them; but before doing so, he announced his intended movement to General Chernishéff, who was at a considerable distance from him with the regular troops of the advanced-guard. A very obstinate engagement began, almost at the gates of Liege. The regiments of Jiroff and Sissoeff for three hours sustained a heavy fire of grape and musquetry, and would infallibly have been driven from their ground, if Benkendorf had not had recourse to a manœuvre in order to keep in and check the greatly superior forces of the enemy. Placing a small number of Cossacks in front of his opponents, he

divided the remainder into two divisions, and ordered them to charge on the flanks as the enemy kept moving on. In the meantime, General Chernishéff hearing the cannonade, and receiving no intelligence of its cause, owing to the aide-de-camp sent to him not having reached the spot where he was, ordered the advanced-guard to march forward. Taking the lead himself, with two squadrons of hussars and two guns, he pushed on at full trot to Liege. Colonel Prince Lapoukhin, who had just been detached with a regiment of Cossacks to the right by the Namur road, received orders to hasten up to the point of attack. In a short time, Chernishéff reached the field of battle and opened a fire from his guns. At the same time, Lapoukhin showed himself on the flank of the French, who, being now attacked on all sides, began to retreat on St. Tron. Their commander, General Castex, was wounded; but what was of far greater importance, this success secured to us the passage of the Meuse, which was indispensable to our farther advance into France.

From Liege, Chernishéff marched to Namur, and having occupied the town on the 14th January, General Wintzengerode halted in it for several days. Having under arms but 8,000 foot and 5,000 horse, including the Cossacks, he considered that it would be an act of rashness to venture with so small a body of troops into the interior of France, through a country bristling with fortresses. He, therefore, invited General Bülow to join him in the advance, and to leave the observation of Antwerp and Maison's army to the Duke of Weimar and the English. Bülow having refused, nothing remained to Wintzengerode but to go on,

especially as he had just received His Imperial Majesty's orders to act with all possible vigour. He, therefore, left Namur for Laon, the Duke of Weimar and General Bülow remaining at Antwerp.

Thus the allied armies, on different sides, penetrated farther and farther into France, meeting no where with serious opposition. Before they crossed the frontiers of that country, the enemy's troops were distributed in the following manner. The observation of the Upper Rhine was entrusted to Marshal Victor; the Middle Rhine, from Strasburg to Coblentz, to Marmont; along the Rhine, downwards from Coblentz, lay Macdonald; Ney was at Nancy, and Mortier at Langres. The different corps were quite independent of each other, and received orders directly from Napoleon, who was then in Paris. From this arrangement, it necessarily followed, that the French were nowhere in sufficient force to oppose resistance to the advancing columns, and could not avail themselves of the fortresses and natural obstacles lying on the line of march. Their corps, stationed at five different points, had more of the character of reconnoitering detachments, than of troops destined for the defence of France. Agreeably to the orders of Napoleon, they every where retreated in the direction of Chalons.

Here and there our advanced guards came into collision with the enemy,—that of the Grand Army at Epinal, St. Dié, and Langres; the Silesian, on crossing the Rhine, at Port-a-Mousson and St. Dizier; that of the Northern army, at Liege. The garrisons of the fortresses occasionally made sallies, without however in the slightest degree impeding the advance of the Allies. At Remiremont a detachment of the Cossacks

of the Grand Army, under the command of Prince Stcherbátov, had a skirmish with the enemy, which was so far remarkable that it was the first occasion on which the sound of a Russian gun had awakened the echoes of France.

In concluding this chapter, we cannot resist noticing the different impressions made on Napoleon and Alexander, on receiving the news of the invasion of their respective empires. Napoleon was coming out of his cabinet, on his way to a meeting of the Legislative Assembly, when it was announced to him that the Allies had invaded the frontiers. Preserving his usual firmness, he said, "If I could have gained two months' delay, the enemy would not have crossed the Rhine. This may lead to bad consequences; but alone, I can do nothing; and if unaided, I must fall: then it will be seen that the war is not directed exclusively against me."—It was at a ball at Vilno, in the house of Count Benningsen, that the general aide-de-camp of the day, Belashéff, informed His Majesty of the arrival of an express, with the news that Napoleon had crossed the Niemen. The Emperor ordered Balashéff to keep the news a secret, and remained till the end of the ball, which lasted for an hour longer. Not one of the company suspected that the general's communication was of peculiar importance, and the truth was not known till His Majesty's return to the palace.—Such traits may, on a first view, appear to be of little moment, but they are worthy of being preserved for posterity, as is every thing relating to Alexander and Napoleon, in whose actions is concentrated the history of the first fifteen years of our century.

CHAPTER III.

The Emperor Alexander enters France—Instructions of Napoleon to Public Functionaries—His Majesty's stay at Langres—Question of Peace or War—The Emperor's Opinion—Congress of Langres—Proposed Conditions of Peace.

THE Emperor having in person led the guards across the Rhine, at Basle, returned to that town, in which he passed four days, while the allied troops were completing the preliminary movements in the enemy's country. On the 4th January he left Basle for the little town of Dèle, lying on the frontiers of Switzerland: here he passed his first night in France. On the following day he arrived at Montbeliard, the birth-place of the Empress Maria Feodorovna,* and where that princess, who was for upwards of fifty years a mother to Russian orphans, passed her early days. On the 6th, His Majesty reached Villersexelles; on the 7th, Combeaufontaine; on the 9th, Faybillot; and on the 10th, Langres, distant about two hundred versts from the Rhine.

The road to Langres was exceedingly heavy. Rain, snow, frost, and thaw retarded, but did not arrest the Emperor or the troops. Though this rapidity of

* Alexander's mother.—TR.

march was not very agreeable to some of the Allies, the Emperor, with his usual activity, continually kept pressing them to advance, often against their will. Having accustomed himself, from his earliest youth, to brave the inconstancy of the elements, he was commonly on horseback, and, as usual, was the best dressed of all around him. His Majesty's suite was not numerous ; it consisted of some of his aide-de-camps and of foreign officers who were at his headquarters. During the first day's march, from Basle to Dèle, he conversed about the war, and among other things said : " If God enable me to accomplish what I have begun, I will, on my return to Russia, occupy myself with the affairs of the Interior."

In the town, where the Emperor slept, he received the municipal authorities and notable citizens, and assured them of his protection. By his order, the necessity of kind treatment of the French, and the observance of strict discipline, were inculcated on the troops. Tranquillized by the words of his Majesty, and by the printed proclamations of the commander-in-chief, announcing the pacific intentions of the allied monarchs, the inhabitants of the districts, entered by the Grand Army, nowhere offered resistance, and readily supplied the bivouacs with provisions, hay, oats and firewood. But as the campaign proceeded, the peasants, in numerous bands, fell on our small detachments. These hostilities of the peasants were at first very rare, and originated not so much in the patriotism of the French, as in the necessity of defending themselves and families from insult, and their property from pillage. Although death was denounced as the punishment of every act of violence, it was impossible to

prevent excesses of various kinds, and even acts of cruelty, especially in villages distant from the high road, to which stragglers from regiments, especially Germans, found their way. In this respect, the latter did not imitate their allies the Russians, who left among the French, although they had desecrated our temples, the reputation of exemplary discipline.

The prefects entrusted with the administration of the departments, and the civil officers in general, almost without exception, quitted the towns, carrying with them the public money. When they announced the passage of the Rhine by the allied armies, they promised the inhabitants to remain with them and defend them to the last extremity ; but no sooner did our light troops approach the towns, than these officers set off for the interior ; so that the towns at once opened their gates, notwithstanding pompous proclamations exhorting the inhabitants to defend them. The prefects had been furnished by Napoleon with the following instructions for their guidance in the event of invasion :

“ On the appearance of the enemy you are directed to leave them the soil only, without the inhabitants, as it has been done in many other countries. If it should be impossible to remove all the inhabitants, you are to leave no means untried to make at least the wealthier families quit their homes on the approach of the enemy ; for those of our subjects, who shall consent to live under their authority, however temporary, must be regarded as traitors to the allegiance they have sworn. You will order the officers of every jurisdiction to remove the records. Every exertion must be made to conceal from the enemy, the documents by which they

might be enabled to govern the country, and to gain a knowledge of the resources available to the supply of their troops. As to your person, you are ordered not to quit your department so long as there shall remain in it a single hamlet unoccupied by the enemy. You are to be the last to quit your department so long as there shall remain in it a single hamlet unoccupied by the enemy. You are to be the last to quit the department entrusted to you by His Majesty ; and if it should be completely conquered, with the exception of a fortress, it is His Majesty's pleasure, that you should shut yourself up in that fortress, and that the moment circumstances permit, you should leave it, to re-enter on the exercise of your functions."

Thirty senators were sent by Napoleon into the provinces adjoining the theatre of war, for the purpose of exciting the inhabitants to a general rising by rousing their passions ; but these attempts proved as vain as the appeals on the same subject which had been issued by the local authorities. The French listened with coldness to the voice of their government, and, as we entered the country, talked only of peace. They walked about with gloomy countenances and downcast eyes, and received their new guests with cold politeness. Nothing was heard from them but the expression of anxious wishes for a speedy termination of the war. Not a word was spoken by any body of a change in the government, or of the Bourbons : it seemed indeed, as if the ancient reigning family were completely forgotten.

The Emperor arrived at Langres on the 10th of January. He passed five days in this town, where the Grand Army had assembled, and, by means of its light

detachments, entered into communication with that of Silesia; thus realizing one of the leading objects in the plan of the campaign as traced by the Emperor at Frankfurt. His Majesty found the corps of the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and Count Giulay, with the reserve in cantonments. Prince Schwarzenberg had thought it expedient to give repose to the troops, after their fatiguing march from the Rhine, and in order to give time to the corps of Witgenstein and Wrédé to come up into line with them. The Emperor's arrival at head-quarters at once inspired new life into all. Orders were immediately issued for the troops to hold themselves in readiness to march. The following day (12th January) the Prince of Wirtemberg and Count Giulay were sent forward by the great Paris road to Chaumont and Bar-sur-Aube, to drive off Mortier, who, with Napoleon's guard, occupied an advantageous position between these towns, near the sources of the Marne. The Prince attacked him in front, Count Giulay turned his right wing, and Mortier, after a somewhat obstinate resistance of two days, retreated to Troyes, evacuating Bar-sur-Aube.

Thus, by the middle of January, the allied armies had passed the Jura and the Vosges. And now, with the left wing leaning on Lyons, and the right on Brienne, the main body stood on the slope of those heights where the Moselle, the Meuse, the Marne, the Aube, the Seine, and the Loire, take their rise. But one step more, and we were on those plains, where, in all probability, there awaited us combats for life and death,—combats, on the issue of which depended the triumph or the ruin of the coalition formed, in the preceding year, for the deliverance of Europe.

In these circumstances it is not to be wondered, if, before so decisive a movement was hazarded, voices should have been heard in favour of peace, and that various considerations should have presented themselves requiring deliberation. In the course of every contest there are epochs at which it is necessary to measure the success obtained, and then to consider, whether the original plan of a campaign is to be kept to, or whether it should be modified by new circumstances, especially by political considerations; or, finally, whether peace, the ultimate object of war, might not be concluded with advantage. Thus, at Vitebsk, Napoleon consulted with his leading generals whether he should continue his advance on Smolensk, or remain where he was, and fortifying various points between the Dwina and the Dnieper, winter in that country, so as to be able in the following year to continue the campaign with refreshed troops; or, whether he should offer terms of peace to Russia and enter into a treaty with her.

In like manner, on the arrival of the Allied Sovereigns at Langres, when the fourth part of France had been subdued almost without firing a shot, the question arose, whether they should rest satisfied with the advantages they had gained, and consequently make peace with Napoleon, or continue the contest, with the intention, if their arms should be crowned with success, of re-establishing in Europe the order of things as it existed before the Revolution. This proposition was fully developed in the following series of questions which we shall here give in an abridged form.

“ Shall the Allies go on and be, as before, guided by the result of military operations alone, or shall they

render them subordinate to political considerations? Has the object of the treaty of alliance, concluded at Toeplitz last year, been attained, viz. to replace Austria and Prussia in the positions they respectively occupied before the year 1805; to fix the Alps, the Rhine, and the Pyrenees as the boundaries of France; to establish independent states between France and the other powers; and to deprive France of all immediate influence beyond her limits? If the object has not been gained, what means should be employed to accomplish it? Is it not necessary to trace new bases, so as not to fall a sacrifice to that want of precision which has proved fatal to all coalitions hitherto formed? Should Napoleon be deprived of his throne alone, or his family with him? Who is to be raised to the throne? Should the Allies use direct influence in the decision of that question? Should a change of dynasty in France form the object of new efforts on their side; or should they give up the initiative to the French, without offering them either encouragement or opposition? Do the Allies agree to sign a peace, which shall fix the Rhine and the Alps as the boundaries of France? Would it not be necessary to proclaim, that not only the allied powers, but all Europe enters into negotiations with France, and, in the event of delay, publicly to announce the offers made to Napoleon?"

The allied Cabinets did not all take the same view of the wide, complicated, and important subject on which hung the destiny of Europe in general, and of every state in particular. The arguments in favour of peace, towards which some of them showed a leaning, appeared altogether inconclusive to the Emperor

Alexander. The following is the substance of His Majesty's opinion :—

“ To stay the operations of the armies for any but military reasons, would be to deprive ourselves of the only decisive means, from the use of which we may expect political advantages. The line of Langres, on which we now are, cannot be called a military one. Langres lies on the road, along which we must march to meet the enemy and fight with him. The present movements of the allied armies are not the beginning of a new campaign, but the consequences of measures formerly ratified, and of our very invasion of France. It never was in contemplation, that the invasion should be limited to vain attempts. It constitutes a mighty warlike undertaking, having for its object to annihilate the resources of the enemy, to deprive him of the means of forming an army, to weaken his power ; in short, to do him all the harm it is possible to do in time of war. I have always insisted on employing our forces in this way, and of keeping our acts in unison with military considerations. It now only remains for us to carry this idea into execution with rapidity and judgment. As long as the war continues, it is impossible to affirm that the object of the coalition has been accomplished : victory must decide that. I have always steadily adhered to this principle, which may now crown our plans with success.

“ As long as a considerable part of Europe was occupied by French troops, we were obliged to proportion our demands to the amount of our force, and to express our object in general terms ; as, for example,—the re-establishment of Prussia, Austria, and the like. Such expressions do not infer the renun-

ciation of those advantages, which Providence, and our enormous sacrifices allow us to hope for. This truth is established by the example of all wars, and even by our own acts. The conditions of peace which were unofficially discussed at Frankfort, are not those we now desire. At Freiburg we thought of other conditions than we did at Basle ; and those which might have been acceptable when we were crossing the Rhine, would not have been accepted at Langres. If it is at all allowable to enlarge our demands, the principle must retain its full force so long as the war continues. The measure of its accomplishment will be regulated by prudence and state reasons ; for no previous agreement between the Allies is in the slightest degree binding on them, in relation to the enemy. We have enlarged our demands in proportion to our successes ; and this, of itself, proves how necessary for us it is to encrease the number of the latter, that we may gain our ends with the greater certainty. A few days are not sufficient to convince us of this ; and therefore, we should not, by a hurried pacification, enable the enemy to escape from his present dangerous position.

“ The Allies are unanimously agreed in this, that they have no right to canvass the opinion of the French on the subject of a ruling dynasty ; and still less to oppose it, whatever it may be. We are not waging war for that object ; consequently it cannot become the subject of deliberation. The Allies have no desire to take such advantage of victory, as to compel the French to express that opinion ; and our glory will be the greater, if, with the power in our hands, we show ourselves devoid of partiality.

“ We have now to agree as to the conditions on

which peace should be offered to France ; it being fully understood, that we reserve the right of encreasing our demands, by availing ourselves of whatever success we may obtain during the course of the negociations. I was the first to declare, that we should treat with France in the name of all Europe ; and I agree that she should be allowed no voice in the fixing of frontiers, or in any arrangements whatever between the other Powers ; though their nature may be communicated to her for the sake of information. All negociations with her must relate exclusively to her future limits. If the negociations should be spun out by delays, or should not be brought to the desired conclusion, I shall then consider it as a duty to publish to France and to Europe the conditions which were offered.”

“ In conclusion, I must direct the attention of the Allies to the forces of the enemy, and to the necessity of crushing them, equally during the course of the negociations, as in the event of all hope of peace having vanished. Napoleon’s weakness consists in the disorder which reigns among the greater part of his troops, and in the inexperience of his new levied recruits, who are strangers to discipline. These are the consequences of the defeats he has sustained ; since which, he has not had time to re-organize his armies ; but his condition is daily improving ; and if we continue to delay, we shall give our enemy the means of effacing every trace of his present embarrassments.

“ Let us even suppose a treaty of peace to be concluded. To carry its various stipulations into effect, would require much time. How many provinces, how many fortresses, from Mantua to the Texel, would the enemy have to deliver up, and we to receive !

If, in the meantime, Napoleon were to recover his strength, and to avail himself of a thousand circumstances which might give rise to fresh discussion on so complex a subject, who can assure us that he would not tear the treaty in pieces, the instant he had caught a glimpse of success? The only security against such danger, is to be found in the destruction of the armies he is collecting, and in rendering it impossible for him to levy fresh troops. All this has no relation to a change of dynasty ; but, if Providence should turn circumstances, and even Napoleon himself, into engines for the destruction of his political existence, it would neither be contrary to justice, nor to the interests of Europe."

In conformity to the Emperor's opinion, it was resolved to continue hostilities, and at the same time to enter into negotiations with Napoleon. His plenipotentiary, Caulaincourt, had been waiting for three weeks, at the advanced posts, for a passport, to enable him to proceed to the town appointed for the Congress. For the purpose of drawing up definite instructions for the guidance of the Congress, a council was held on the 16th January, at which the following persons were present : on the part of Russia, Counts Razumófsky and Nesselrode ; on that of Austria, Prince Metternich and Count Stadion ; on that of Prussia, Prince Hardenberg ; England was represented by her minister for foreign affairs, Lord Castlereagh, who had just arrived from London.

It was proposed to the council, as the sum of their deliberations,—

1st. To enter into negotiations with Napoleon. 2nd. To act in the name of Europe. 3rd. To leave France

those territories only which belonged to her before the war of 1792. 4th. If Napoleon should desire it, to give him a superficial idea, avoiding details, of the intentions of the Allied Sovereigns with respect to the ultimate territorial arrangement of Europe. 5th. To furnish the plenipotentiaries with instructions of one and the same import; and 6th. In the event of the negociations not leading to the desired end, to announce this to the French nation.

When the Allied Sovereigns had given their sanction to these articles, the following plenipotentiaries were appointed to the Congress which was destined to be held at Chatillon on the Seine: on our part, Count Razumófsky; on that of Austria, Count Stadion; on that of Prussia, Baron Humboldt; and on that of England, Lords Cathcart, Aberdeen, and General Stuart.

The instructions given to the plenipotentiaries were,—that they should negotiate on behalf of all Europe, and not in name of the four Powers alone, by whom they were commissioned; the latter pledging themselves that the other States, who were not represented at the Congress, should adhere to its acts. The plenipotentiaries were desired to confine themselves to two objects only. In the first place, to the future boundaries of France; and in the second, to the general arrangement of the affairs of Europe. With respect to the first article, it was proposed to Napoleon, that he should give up all the conquests made by France since the year 1792. As to the second, he was required, 1st, to acknowledge the independence of Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Holland; which last, with some additions of territory,

was to belong to the house of Orange; 2ndly, to restore the Spanish sceptre to Ferdinand VII.; 3dly, to deliver over, within a given time, the fortresses in the countries which had been conquered by France; Mentz, for instance, within eight days after the signing of peace, and Luxembourg, Antwerp, Bergen-op-Zoom, Mantua, Peschiera, Palma-Nova, and Venice, within ten days:—to put into the hands of the Allies, within four days, the three fortresses of Bédfort, Bésançon and Huningen, to be kept by them in the nature of pledges, till the complete fulfilment of all the stipulations in the treaty of peace. 4thly, To renounce the titles of King of Italy and Protector of the Rhenish and Swiss Confederations. In return for all which sacrifices, England agreed to restore the colonies she had conquered during the war.

Although the plenipotentiaries received the same instructions, it did not follow that all the cabinets were alike desirous to bring the war to a close. Some, who were exhausted by the campaign and by the sacrifices connected with it, considered peace as indispensable; but the Emperor Alexander looked at events in another point of view. On sending Count Razumófsky to the Congress, he desired him to be in no hurry to act, and on no account to sign any thing without an express order to that effect. The plenipotentiary acted conformably to the will of his Sovereign, and during the sitting of the Congress received repeated assurances of His Majesty's approbation of his prudent circumspection.

Thus in the course of His Majesty's fifteen days' stay at Langres, the question of peace or war was decided, and the misunderstandings which had arisen

on this important subject were removed. Hardly was this task accomplished, when on the night of the 19th January, an officer sent from Chaumont by General Toll, brought the intelligence of Napoleon's having begun to act on the offensive. An hour had not elapsed before His Majesty, in a dark and stormy night, was on his way from Langres to Chaumont, the head-quarters of Prince Schwartzenberg. Immediately after his departure, the plenipotentiaries left Langres for the Congress of Chatillon. Warlike operations, and diplomatic negotiations thus began at the same time, and continued in uninterrupted connexion during the rest of the campaign.

CHAPTER IV.

Napoleon arrives at Chalons—Commencement of Military Operations—Movements of the Russian Forces—Critical Position of Blücher—Affair of Brienne, on 17th January—Blücher retires—Preparations to attack Napoleon—Order of the Allied Army—Victory of Brienne—Honours conferred by the Emperor Alexander.

IT was during the Emperor Alexander's stay at Langres that Napoleon quitted Paris for the army. He had put off his departure from day to day, waiting for the arrival of troops from Spain, and for the results of his exertions in the formation and equipment of armies : but receiving daily reports of the rapid advance of the Allies into the heart of France, it was impossible for him to remain longer in Paris, and he therefore resolved to open the campaign, though his preparations for war were not yet completed. He invested his consort with the regency of the empire, and entrusted the military command of Paris to his brother Joseph. On leaving the capital he gave orders, for the first time since he had mounted the throne, that prayers should be read in all the churches for the success of his arms.

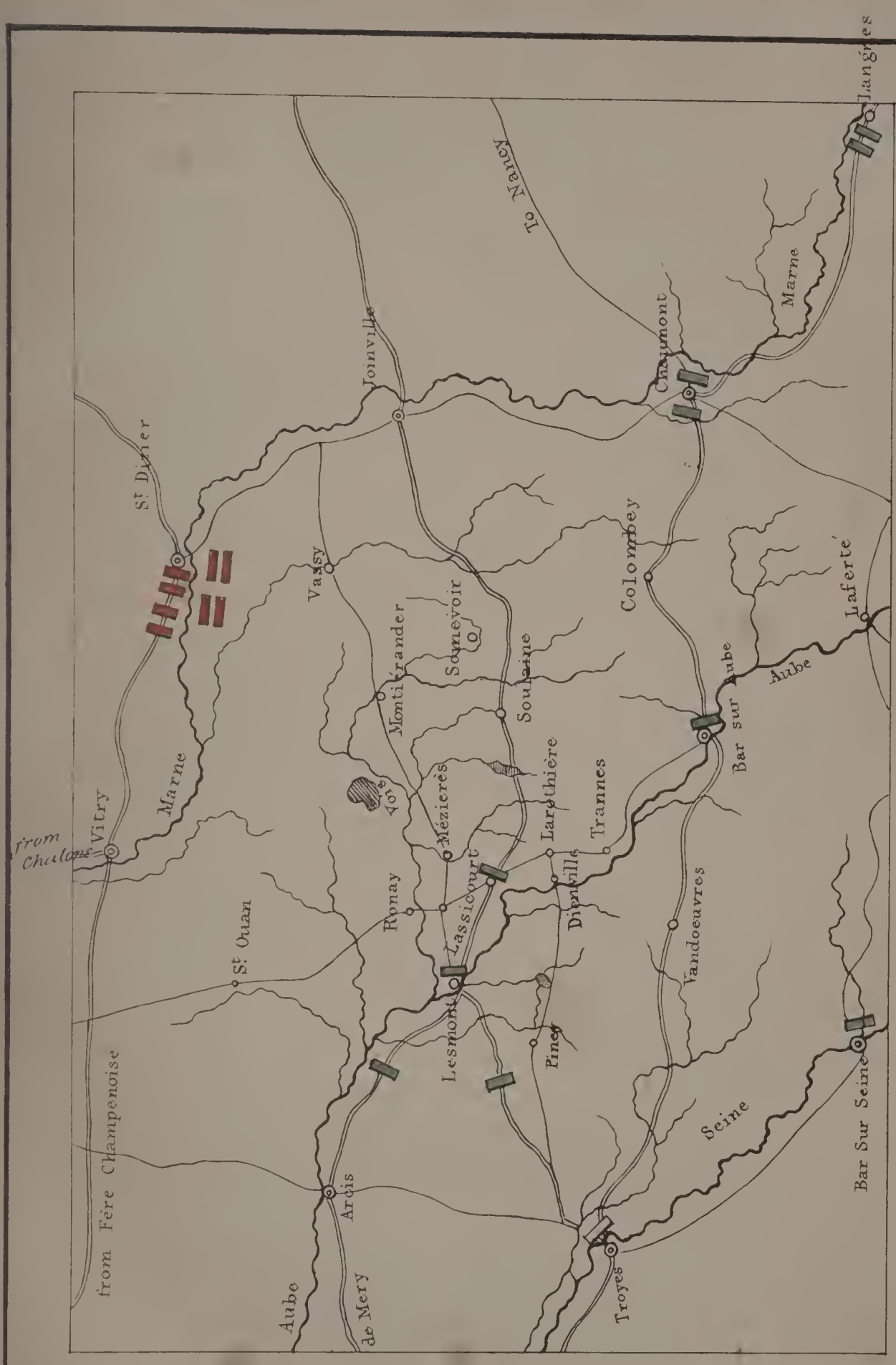
Towards evening, on the 14th of January, Chalons resounded with cries of "Long live the Emperor!" The troops repeated the shouts of the people, the

trumpets sounded, the drums beat, and the colours were unfurled. The thunder of artillery and the ringing of bells announced the arrival of Napoleon.

Chalons was the head-quarters of that army, which Napoleon chose to command in person: the following were the positions which it occupied. The centre, composed of the corps of Marshals Ney, Victor, and Marmont, was stationed between Chalons and Vitry; the left wing, under Marshal Macdonald was moving up from Mézières through Rhétel to Chalons, and the right, commanded by Marshal Mortier, was at Troyes. Farther to the right, at Auxerre, on the banks of the Yonne, lay the detachment of General Alix. Napoleon instantly issued orders for the troops to advance. His object was to unite his whole forces at Vitry, march through St. Dizier on Joinville and Chaumont, and thus placing himself between the army of Silesia and the Grand Army, to charge the heads of the columns of the latter, and to rout its corps in detail. Marshal Augereau was ordered, at the same time, to drive back the Austrians from Lyons into Switzerland, to force his way into that republic, stir up the people to insurrection, and then to act on the communications of the Grand Army of the Allies. General Maison, who was in command of a detached corps, was charged with the defence of the Netherlands and the northern frontiers of France.

Napoleon remained only twelve hours in Chalons. From that town he went on to Vitry, and the day following to St. Dizier, where he attacked the detachment of General Lanskoj, who had been left there by Blücher to keep up his communications on the side of Bar-le-Duc with the advanced troops of York. By

POSITIONS OF THE CONTENDING ARMIES AT THE OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN BY NAPOLEON.



Lith. ^{ed} by L. M. Jefferre, Paris.

1 Verst 1160 $\frac{2}{3}$ Eng: yds
 5 10 15 20 25 versts

this movement Napoleon cut off the corps of the Prussian Field Marshal from that of York, who was in the country around Metz, observing the fortresses on the Meuse. At St. Dizier, Napoleon received from the inhabitants, as well as from the prisoners and his spies, certain intelligence, which had not reached him at Chalons, that the army of Silesia, having crossed the Marne at St. Dizier and Joinville, was advancing towards Arcis, with the intention of crossing the Aube at Lesmont, while the Grand Army was widely disseminated, partly between Langres, Chaumont, and Barsur-Aube, and partly about Châtillon and Dijon. In these circumstances two plans of action presented themselves: the first was to follow Blücher and fall upon him during his passage of the Aube; the second, which was in conformity to his original intention, was to continue his movement on Joinville and Chaumont against the Grand Army. He chose the former, and started for the Aube.

On reading Lanskoj's report of his having been driven out of St. Dizier by superior numbers and forced to retreat to Vassy, Blücher took this attack for an ordinary reconnoissance, and, of course, paid no attention to it. He ordered Lanskoj to continue to watch the roads to Vassy and Joinville, and Sacken to take up a position at Lesmont, and with his advanced guards to occupy Arcis-sur-Aube and Troyes, whither all the cavalry had been sent forward. While these dispositions were being carried into execution, the Field-Marshal was at the castle of Brienne with the two divisions of Olsoofief only; and not once suspecting Napoleon's arrival, was engaged, with all his usual confidence, in meditating new plans of offensive

warfare. About mid-day, a prisoner was brought in to him from the advanced posts. This was Colonel Bernard of the General Staff, who had been sent by Napoleon to Troyes with an order for Marshal Mortier to close up to his, Napoleon's, left wing, for the purpose of making a combined attack on Blücher. From this officer he received detailed information of the ultimate projects of Napoleon, who, by cross roads and forced marches was now advancing straight on Brienne through Montierander.

All doubt was now at an end. The Field Marshal instantly sent an order to Sacken to quit Lesmont and join him at Brienne. As Blücher did not intend giving battle where he was, he resolved to keep his ground only till Sacken should have joined him, and then, if the enemy should press upon him, to retire to a strong position at Trannes between Brienne and Barsur-Aube, in order to get into the closest possible communication with the Grand Army, whose advanced posts were in the neighbourhood of the latter town. He felt very uneasy about the cavalry, which was already beyond the Aube, doubting whether it could reach in due time the place of junction where it would be required for patrols and reconnoitring parties. By good luck Count Witgenstein's advanced guard, under the command of Count Pahlen, now showed itself in the rear of the Silesian army. Our readers will remember that these troops had left the commander of the corps on the Rhine, and had advanced singly between the Grand and the Silesian armies. On this day, the 17th of January, it was Count Pahlen's intention to march from Dienville to Piney by the Troyes road. Part of his advanced guard had already

crossed the Aube, but, on receiving an invitation from Blücher to join him, the Count immediately complied with it, marched through Brienne, and forming on the road by which the enemy was expected, covered Sacken's movement from Lesmont to Brienne.

At Chaumont, on the night of 16th, Prince Schwarzenberg received the news of the French having begun to act on the offensive, and of Lanskoy's having been driven out of St. Dizier. This intelligence produced a very different effect on the Prince from what it had done on Blücher. Far from treating it with contempt, as did the latter, he justly concluded, that Napoleon had at last opened the campaign. Aide-de-camps were instantly sent off on every side with orders for the troops to assemble at Bar-sur-Aube. Promptitude was the more necessary that the corps lay widely distant from each other. On the morning of the 17th, the Emperor Alexander reached Chaumont, the headquarters of Prince Schwarzenberg, having, before quitting Langres, given orders to Count Barclay instantly to proceed to Chaumont with the reserve. On his arrival, his Majesty, along with the Prince, concerted the necessary measures for disengaging Blücher, who was exposed to evident danger at Brienne, and to hinder the enemy from taking advantage of the want of concentration in the allied armies. As the enemy's real object was still a secret, the following orders were issued. First, Count Wrédé and Witgenstein (who had just arrived from the Rhine) to march on Joinville and Vassy, in order to keep the French in check if they should advance on Chaumont. Secondly, the corps of the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, Count Giulay, and the reserves of Count Barclay, to unite at

Bar-sur-Aube. Thirdly, Count Colloredo, who but a few days before had set out from Dijon, to march to the same point and join the Grand Army.

In the meantime, while Blücher was waiting for Sacken, in order to retire to Trannes, Napoleon having marched from St. Dizier through Montierand, reached Mézières at two o'clock in the afternoon. He instantly attacked Count Pahlen, who was standing between that town, Lassicour, and Brienne, and keeping possession of the great road, which it was necessary for us to retain in our hands at any cost, in order to give Sacken time to come up from Lesmont and pass through Brienne, then occupied by Olsoofief. The onset grew brisker every minute. The French balls already began to pass over the advanced-guard, and to fall among Sacken's columns which had arrived from the banks of the Aube. Napoleon could not bring his whole forces at once into line, as a great part of them had not yet had time to reach the field of action; but by degrees, as they came up, the affair became serious. Olsoofief's guns, which Blücher had placed under the orders of Nikétin, who was in command of the artillery of Sacken's corps, were brought out of the town by that officer, and placed in battery. A regiment of light infantry threw out skirmishers; the other regiments stood in close columns, covered by the streets and gardens, and the great road was thus entirely cleared for Sacken's passage through Brienne. Having passed through the town, he formed in the reserve, and Count Pahlen gradually retired, not being in a condition, with his small detachment, to keep the increasing forces of the enemy at bay. Besides, he had attained his object, which was to gain time for the

infantry to arrive and to take up their appointed ground. He placed the cavalry on the right flank, uncovered the town, and cleared the way for the artillery which now began to play.

The enemy showered shells on the town, and instantly set it on fire. Necessity compelled Napoleon to reduce to ashes the place where he was educated, and where he had spent the happy days of his boyhood. Part of his infantry charged the fifteenth company of artillery and took several guns, and his dragoons dashed into Brienne in the midst of the spreading flames, the bursting of grenades, and the crash of falling tiles. Nikétin, on receiving an order from Sacken to increase his fire, placed twenty-four guns against the enemy's left flank, which forced them to retreat, and to abandon the guns they had taken from our 15th company. At the same time, Count Pahlen, though not belonging to the army of Silesia, yet as the oldest General of cavalry, took the command of all the horse, charged the left wing of the French and took eight guns. The town remained in our hands, and the combat gradually slackened.

Considering the battle to be ended, Field Marshal Blücher retired to pass the night in the castle of Brienne, which is situated on a neighbouring eminence, and the officers of his staff parted to seek shelter for the night. All at once a fire of musketry was heard, and crowds of the enemy who had stolen through the park, broke into the castle with loud shouts and cries. At this moment the Field Marshal was in the top story looking at the line of fires which the enemy were kindling in front of their bivouacs. He hastened down stairs and set off towards the town, but was soon

met by a Cossack, who informed him that the French had forced their way into Brienne. By the light of the flames of the burning houses, Blücher could plainly distinguish the enemy's horse coming straight up to him at a trot. He turned aside into a cross road, and as he continued to go at a walk, the chief of his staff, General Gneisenau, said to him, "Can it be your wish, to be carried in triumph to Paris?" The Field-Marshal then put spurs to his horse, and happily reached his troops. Several French squadrons had approached the town unperceived, and finding that our people had neglected to place guards at the entrances, charged along the street where Sacken was then giving orders. He backed his horse against a house which stood near him, and coolly waited till the enemy had passed by without recognizing, in their hurry, him who, but two months afterwards, was Governor-General of Paris.

After this alarm, the Field Marshal ordered the castle to be attacked and the town to be entirely cleared of the enemy, who had established themselves in some houses in the suburbs. Olsoofief advanced twice to the assault of the castle, not only without success, but with heavy loss, owing to the enemy being protected by the darkness, while our columns and sharpshooters advancing in the full glare of the burning edifices, presented a mark which it was almost impossible to miss. The French kept possession of the castle, as did Sacken of the town, in which he passed the night. At two o'clock in the morning he received orders to retire to the position at Trannes on the road to Bar-sur-Aube, where the Grand Army now was.

Thus ended Napoleon's first affair in France, at

which, on the side of the Allies, there were none but Russian troops present. Fate had thus ordained that our countrymen should stand the first brunt of this campaign, and not only repulse all the attacks of an enemy superior to them in numbers, but even capture eight pieces of cannon. Here Sacken, who, as commanding the troops engaged, had been charged by Blücher with the arrangement of details, gave a bright display of that immoveable firmness which forms the peculiar characteristic of his military career. Both Russians and French fought with inveterate obstinacy. The loss on either side, in killed and wounded, amounted to three thousand men. Success was absolutely necessary to Napoleon on opening the campaign as a means of raising the spirits of the troops and people, of resuscitating their former opinion of his invincibility and of tranquillizing the empire, now alarmed by the rapid advance of the Allies. The defence of the Russians was desperate. They had not entered France to yield up their renown, in the outset of the campaign, to an enemy over whom they had triumphed for two years together. Napoleon in announcing this affair, spoke of it as of a prodigious victory : as he did not gain it, however, on the field of battle, it may be that he thought he was entitled to appropriate it to himself, for the single reason that Blücher retired, on the morning after, to the distance of a few versts. This combat, however, contributed in no other respect to his satisfaction, for he did not succeed in accomplishing his purpose of falling on the rear of the army of Silesia, and cutting it off from the Grand Army. On the contrary, the combat was productive of this beneficial consequence to the

Allies, that it proved the immediate occasion of their junction.

Napoleon had two means in his power of gaining a decided superiority. The first was to assemble all his forces at Sommevoir after occupying St. Dizier, and, without halting, to march straight on Colombé, and Bar-sur-Aube, there to attack Count Giulay, and the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, and driving them before him to Bar-sur-Seine, at one and the same time separate Blücher from Schwarzenberg, who would have been obliged, with all haste, to assemble his different corps at Langres, and probably in the rear of that town. Napoleon might then have turned on Blücher and beat him ; for he was much the stronger of the two, and Blücher would not have disputed the ground with the obstinacy he displayed at Brienne, where a safe retreat was always open to him, but would have been compelled to think only of saving his army. The second plan, which would have afforded a reasonable hope of victory, was the following:—If Napoleon had the defeat of Blücher singly in view, then, instead of keeping away to the right, it seems evident that he should have marched from Sommevoir on Dienville, that is, on Blücher's communications with Prince Schwarzenberg, and have attacked him in the rear. Napoleon did not follow either of these plans ; and the useless bloodshed of the 17th January, which gave him but a momentary possession of the field of battle, was productive of positive injury to him, as it led to the concentration of the allied forces.

It may further be added that Napoleon, who in all his previous wars had displayed consummate skill in commencing operations, did not on the present oc-

casion act up to his reputation, but opened the campaign unseasonably. Let us suppose that it did enter into his plans to defend the Rhine, and to hinder the Allies from entering France: but when they had once advanced over a great extent of country, why did he not act on their communications? If he had undertaken his forward movement four days later, when the rear of our columns would not have been far from Troyes, and then pushed on from Chalons, through Joinville and Chaumont, he would have stood on the communications of the Grand Army, and would himself have been leaning on Metz, Verdun, and other fortresses. In such circumstances Prince Schwarzenberg must undoubtedly have retreated. The solidity of this remark is so far justified by Napoleon's resorting at the end of the campaign, to the manœuvre we have now described: but it was made too late to be attended with success; for his means were not then so considerable as they were in the beginning of the war. Besides, political circumstances had by that time so far ripened, that a single bold step of the Allies sufficed to overthrow the edifice of his power.

On the following day, 18th January, preparations were made to attack Napoleon. For that purpose the Grand Army marched for Trannes, with the exception of Counts Witgenstein and Wrédé who had been ordered to cover the right wing of the army, by taking possession of Vassy and St. Dizier; for it was not yet known, that General York had, that very day, on his way from Metz, taken the latter of these towns.—Count Witgenstein, agreeably to the orders he had received, occupied Vassy and halted there. On the other hand Count Wrédé, having learned on his way

to Joinville, that preparations were making for a general engagement, and that Vassy was already in the hands of the Allies, justly reckoned, that the enemy could not be in force in that quarter. Without orders, and of his own authority, he changed the direction of his corps, led it through Doulevant and Tremilly to Soulaire, and, reaching within twenty-four hours the enemy's left wing, contributed greatly, by this skilful manœuvre, to the victory gained on the 20th January. Count Wrédé was fully convinced of the groundlessness of all apprehension of danger on the right wing of the army, and when he reported his march on Soulaire to Prince Schwarzenberg, requested him to order Count Witgenstein to proceed to Brienne. His suggestion, however, met with no attention, and Count Witgenstein fruitlessly remained at Vassy while the allied armies were engaged with Napoleon.

After the affair of Brienne, Napoleon did not attack Blücher at Trannes, although he was superior in force. He remained two days at Brienne and occupied Dienville, La Rothière, Chaumenil, La Giberie and Petit-Menil, villages in front of his position. The French advanced guard, was somewhat in advance of these villages and occasionally fired cannon shot at the rear-guard of the army of Silesia, commanded by Count Pahlen. Napoleon's inactivity during the two days consumed in effecting the junction of the two armies, appeared so utterly incredible that the Emperor Alexander sent several times to inquire if he actually remained in the position he had taken up. Once only, a pretty considerable body of French troops marched from Brienne to Lesmont, but returned again to their position. We may be allowed to conclude that Napo-

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leon had been meditating some plan, which he did not carry into execution. It has been asserted that his inactivity was caused by false intelligence of the Grand Army being on the march to Auxerre, and that he spent these two days at Brienne with the intention of waiting the completion of this movement, in order to fall separately upon one or other of the allied armies.

In the course of the last two days, the face of affairs had completely changed. On the 16th January, Napoleon was in full advance, having on his side all the advantages which in time of war are always within the grasp of him, who first opens the campaign. He threatened our line of communications, and had it in his power to beat the allied forces in detail, they being scattered over so wide an extent of country, that in the event of a sudden onfall, it would have been impossible to concentrate them in time for mutual defence. But now, on the evening of the 19th, the mass of these troops, already concentrated, lay before him, covering and securing their communications, and prepared to act on the offensive.

The Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia having slept at Chaumont, set out from that town early on the morning of the 20th January, by the way of Bar-sur-Aube, and at two o'clock arrived on the heights of Trannes. Here their majesties were met by the three commanders-in-chief, Prince Schwarzenberg, Blücher, and Barclay, who were only waiting for the orders of the Allied Monarchs to engage. The troops were ranged in the following order of battle. The left wing, consisting of Austrians, under the command of Count Giulay, was posted close to the banks of the Aube, and opposite to the village of Jesseins.

The centre was at Trannes, composed of Sacken's corps, in which were present the cavalry of General Vassiltchikof,—the 6th, or Prince Stcherbátov's corps of infantry,—the 9th, or Olsoofief's,—and the 11th, or Count Lieven's: add to these the Prussian detachment of Prince Biron. On the right wing the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg was at Eclance, and still farther to his right, General Wrédé at Soulain. Behind Trannes was stationed the reserve, under the command of the Grand Duke Constantine. It was formed of our grenadiers and the second and third division of cuirassiers; the guards, with the remainder of the cavalry and artillery of the reserve, were still farther in the rear of Arçonval and Eleville.

There were a hundred thousand men under arms, of whom 40,000 were Russians, 20,000 Austrians, 8000 Prussians, 17,000 Bavarians, and 14,000 Wirtembergers. Not more than 80,000, however, took part in the combat, as the reserve was not called into action. In this number we do not include Count Colloredo's Austrian corps of 25,000 men, which did not reach Vandœuvres from Bar-sur-Seine till past two o'clock in the afternoon, having been ordered to march from the former town, along the left bank of the Aube, in order to wrest the bridge of Dienville out of the hands of the enemy. It followed that Count Colloredo did not arrive on the field of battle till the engagement was over. All the troops were placed under the command of Marshal Blücher, to whom the sovereigns had confided the ordering of the battle.

The weather was gloomy, and a cold wind blew in gusts driving heavy snow showers, which for some minutes at a time rendered every thing invisible; but

when the sky cleared up, the lines of the French troops were plainly to be seen, formed in order of battle before Brienne. The extremity of their right wing, which was under the command of General Gérard, was at Dienville, the left wing, commanded by Marshal Marmont, rested on Morvilliers, and the centre occupied La Rothière, la Giberie, Petit-Menil and Chaumenil. In the rear of these villages were stationed the reserve and the guard, under the command of Marshals Mortier, Oudinot, and Ney. In the enemy's army there were seventy thousand men under arms. For those who, in the campaigns of former years, had witnessed the impetuous attacks of Napoleon, it was curious to see this once despotic sovereign of the battle-field (in whose presence but few generals ventured to manœuvre, striving only to ward off his blows), now that the war had been carried into the heart of France, standing motionless at Brienne, that place so fruitful to him in youthful recollections, and modestly waiting to see what the Allies would do. Even the choice of his position was injudicious. In the event of victory, he could not take advantage of it, for the Allies, if defeated, could retreat, unmolested, beyond Bar-sur-Aube, on the direct line of their communications.

From the heights of Trannes there was a very extensive view of the surrounding country. This circumstance gave occasion to a great deal of discussion about the approaching battle, with reference especially to the most advantageous way of attacking the enemy. Prince Schwarzenberg, and the chief of his staff, Count Radetsky, kept to their original plan, in conformity to which orders had already been sent to the

chiefs of corps to attack the enemy in front, and to General Wrédé to turn the right wing. General Toll, in the presence of the Emperor Alexander, objected: "that the position itself pointed out the necessity of making the principal attack on the left wing of the French, so as to cut off their passage at Lesmônt, the only point on which they could retreat. To gain this object," he continued, "the corps of the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, and the grenadier corps, with the second and third divisions of cuirassiers should be directed against Napoleon's left wing,—to endeavour, jointly with the corps of General Wrédé, to press back the enemy on the Aube and seize the passage at Lesmônt. The corps of the guards should be left in reserve, behind the centre, and keeping time with the attack of the right wing, it should bring forward its right flank, in order, by every possible means, to force the enemy back on the Aube, where he has no passage, and, by that means, to rout him completely and capture his artillery." This plan was partially carried into execution. The corps of the Hereditary Prince, with a brigade of grenadiers, was ordered to connect the movements of the centre with the corps of Count Wrédé.

During these discussions it was impossible to look at Field Marshal Blücher without a feeling of deep interest. He kept silence, although in his capacity of leader in the battle, he was one of the principal personages in the fearful drama which was just going to begin. It seemed as if he were only waiting for the moment of action to settle his old accounts with the French at the bloody banquet of death. The day before, Prince Schwarzenberg had sent one of his

confidential Generals to ask his opinion on the subject of the proposed attack. Instead of strategetical remarks, he received the following answer. "We must march to Paris. Napoleon has been in all the capitals of the Continent, and it is our duty to return the compliment, and to make him descend from a throne, which it would have been well for Europe and our Sovereigns, that he had never mounted. We shall have no repose till we pull him down."

In order to distinguish the troops, which belonged to six different sovereigns, and who, for the first time, here fought united, it was ordered that all, from the General to the private soldier, should wear a white band on the left arm. Afterwards, on entering Paris, this badge contributed not a little to give the French the false idea that the colour of the band showed the intention of the Allied Monarchs to replace the Bourbons on the throne of France. But that, at this time, such an idea had not entered into their combinations, is proved by the following words, spoken by the Emperor Alexander. General Jomini having stated to the Emperor, that his colour would probably give occasion to conjectures, as to the feeling of the Allied Sovereigns towards the Bourbons, his Majesty replied: "What have I to do with them?"

The monarchs now gave the order to attack. Count Giulay advanced on Dienville, the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg on La Giberie, Sacken on La Rothière, and Count Wrédé moved from Soulaire on Morvilliers. The Prince of Wirtemberg, on his way to La Giberie, met the enemy in the outskirts of a wood, from which he dislodged him with his sharpshooters, and then, approaching a village occupied by the French, formed

his troops in column as they came out of the wood, and, at the point of the bayonet, drove the enemy from the position, and took three pieces of cannon. The possession of this village was of advantage to us, inasmuch as it served as a connecting link in the chain of operations of the whole line, that is, between the centre, commanded by Sacken and Count Wrédé's left wing. This connexion being secured, Sacken was ordered to attack La Rothière, and Giulay, Dienville.

As the deep ground was likely to impede the progress of the artillery, Nikétin, who commanded that arm in Sacken's corps, requested permission to advance with only half the number of his guns, thirty-six, and to leave the remaining thirty-six on the heights of Trannes, where, in the event of the failure of the attack, they would be useful for defence. He added, that he would answer for success, if he were allowed to take as many men and horses from the guns left in position, as he required. This proposal was reported to Field-Marshal Blücher, who at once assented to it. General Nikétin now ordered ten horses to be put to each of the heavy guns; six to the light, and five to the caissons, and placing the men on the guns and tumbrils, set off at full speed for the great road. On reaching it, he formed line under a heavy discharge from the enemy's guns, and opened the cannonade. The French dragoons now advanced to the attack, and the battery, which was not yet covered, (the regiments appointed for that purpose being still a great way behind) ceased firing. The cannonniers placed the charges on their cloaks, close by the guns, to save time in carrying them, and allowing the dragoons to approach within seven hundred yards, opened so heavy a fire of round and grape, that

the French, before they had got within two hundred yards of them, were forced to wheel about and retreat in disorder. The snow now fell so thick that objects were no longer discernible at the shortest distance, and the firing again ceased for a few minutes. In a short time, however, it began to freeze, and men and horses were sent for the thirty-six guns left at Trannes, which they quickly brought up.

While this was going on, the infantry and cavalry of General Sacken's corps drew near, and the attack proceeded on all points. Count Lieven advanced on La Rothière; and Prince Stcherbátof, on Sacken's right, went up to attack the enemy's centre, which was defended by a battery of twenty-eight guns: Olsoofief remained in the reserve. Heedless of the heavy fire of the enemy, the infantry neither halted nor wavered for an instant. Without firing a single shot, our regiments advanced in perfect order, and that of the Dneiper, which led the Prince's column, was headed by the regimental singers. Lanskoy, with the third division of hussars, charged the enemy's horse and broke them; but as he was pursuing, he was attacked and driven back in his turn; but being immediately reinforced by the division of dragoons of Pantchulidzef, the French cavalry was again charged, broken, and driven off the ground, leaving uncovered the battery of twenty-eight guns, which was immediately stormed by Stcherbátof's corps and Vassiltchikof's cavalry. The attacks we have described were, in the beginning, visible to the Emperor; but as they went on, the troops were soon hidden from his view by a dense cloud of smoke, from the centre of which was heard only the roar of artillery. This lasted for some minutes;

but hardly had the smoke begun to clear away, when an aide-de-camp arrived with the report of the capture of the battery. After this feat, Stcherbátov remaining in person with one division to keep possession of the battery, sent off the other to the left to reinforce Count Lieven at La Rothière. This village formed the key of the enemy's position; but it soon passed into the hands of Sacken. Till nine o'clock in the evening the French continued their attempts to recover it, but in vain.

The Prince of Wirtemberg, whose left wing was already secured by the successes of the Russians in the centre, approached Petit-Menil, wrested it from the enemy, and took nine pieces of cannon. The movements of Count Wrédé were equally rapid and successful. At the first shock with the French, the Austrian cavalry of his corps captured six pieces of artillery, and the Count afterwards took the village of Chaumenil by assault, capturing six guns. Count Guilay alone made several attempts on Dienville, but was always driven back.

The centre of the French line of battle having been broken through, and the left wing beaten, Napoleon lost all hope of maintaining his position, and was forced to retire. Desiring to effect his retreat in good order, and to conceal for some time his real intention, he despatched a part of the reserve to reinforce the left wing; and, with the remainder, and a numerous artillery, made a fresh attack on La Rothière. This was late in the evening and in the dark, the field of battle being only now and then partially illuminated by the feeble rays of the moon. Being fully sensible of the great importance of the possession of La Rothière,

Napoleon, Blücher, and Sacken personally directed the fight in the streets of that village. The French, by their renewed attack, succeeded in carrying it, but they were soon driven out by the grenadier regiments of Little Russia and Astrachan, which had hurried up to the combat. This reinforcement was the consequence of an order, given in time by the Emperor to Count Barclay, to move up the whole grenadier corps, with the second and third division of cuirassiers, in order to reinforce the troops engaged, and, at the same time, to bring the guards forward to replace the grenadiers. The French then began to retire to Brienne, and Guilay, at midnight, after a sixth assault, carried Dienville, which the enemy did not yield till La Rothière was finally in our possession. All the villages occupied by the French in the beginning of the battle, had fallen into our hands. The darkness of a gloomy January night did not allow us to take advantage of the victory, and our advanced posts were thrown out as it were gropingly, but so near to the enemy as not to lose sight of them. Some of the officers of the French General's staff lost their way in the dark, and, wandering within our lines, were made prisoners. As in the preceding year at Leipsic, so now before Brienne, the aide-de-camps of the different generals, commanders of corps, brought reports of their successes straight to the Emperor. Some of them received orders of knighthood on the height of Trannes, where his Majesty remained the whole day. When Count Nostitz, Blücher's aide-de-camp, brought the news of La Rothière being definitively in our possession, the emperor embraced him with these words: "Tell the Field Marshal that he has crowned all his former

victories.” The day was indeed a day of triumph for the Prussian leader, who commanded and fought under the eyes of the Allied Monarchs, and of the two commanders-in-chief. Prince Schwarzenberg and Count Barclay were spectators of the combat, which Blücher ably directed and happily terminated ; but neither word nor look betrayed the slightest feeling of jealousy in either. On the contrary, they strove to co-operate with him by their counsels, and by their readiness to send him reinforcements from the troops under their command. It is a pleasant duty to cite this noble feature of their respective characters ; and while doing homage to the unsullied purity of the feelings of those distinguished commanders, to hold them up to admiration, as the worthy organs of the will of two virtuous monarchs.

The Emperor was entirely satisfied with the good order and valour of the Russian troops. Above all, he praised the conduct of Sacken, adding, “ How blameable do I feel myself in regard to him ! It was all owing to ——— who calumniated him. Yet, I hope Sacken will now be satisfied with me.” His Majesty decorated him with the order of Saint Andrew: he had made him, a few days before, a present of fifty thousand rubles for the passage of the Rhine. In his report of this battle, Sacken says : “ On this superb and memorable day, Napoleon has ceased to be the enemy of the human race ; and Alexander may say :— “ I give peace to the world.” We quote his own words for the purpose of satisfying those who, many years hence, may perhaps be desirous to know in what terms he, who was the chief author of our success,

expressed himself on the subject of the battle of Brienne.

The trophies of this first victory gained over France were a thousand prisoners, and seventy-three pieces of cannon taken at the point of the bayonet. Two circumstances materially contributed to the capture of these guns. In the first place, the boggy nature of the ground and the wretched roads, which made it very difficult to transport cannon from one place to another; and in the second, the superiority of the cavalry of the allies, which the French horse, sent by Napoleon to cover his batteries, was unable to withstand. The loss of the Allies, in killed and wounded, amounted to four thousand men. The commanders-in-chief, Prince Schwarzenberg, Count Barclay, and Blücher were rewarded with gold swords, set with jewels and adorned with laurels.

The Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, Count Wrédé, Vassiltchikof, and Prince Stcherbátov received the order of St. George of the second class.

“What will they say at Paris after this victory?” observed the Emperor, as he was leaving the field of battle on his way to pass the night at Bar-sur-Aube. In fact, the effect produced on the minds of the French by the result of this battle was indescribable. Although Napoleon, in his bulletins, called it an affair of the rear-guard, which he had brought on merely for the sake of facilitating the concentration of his troops at Troyes, yet the truth very soon became known. His most zealous supporters were obliged to acknowledge that he had been defeated. They could not, as formerly, pretend to ascribe the triumph of the Allies to a concurrence of unexpected circumstances; as, for

example, the rising of the waters of the Danube, on the day of Aspern, the rigour of the elements in Russia, or the treason of the Saxons at Leipsic. Another and not less important advantage of the victory at Brienne was, that it gave security to the invasion of France by the Allies, confirmed their influence in the country in their rear, on the left bank of the Rhine, and proved, what in the outset many had doubted, that even in the heart of France it was possible to triumph over Napoleon.

CHAPTER V.

The French retreat—Troyes abandoned by Napoleon—Intrigues against Napoleon—The Emperor Alexander's stay at Troyes—Congress of Châtillon—Discussions of the Conditions of Peace—The Emperor Alexander's Opinion opposed by the leading Ministers of the Allied Sovereigns.

DURING the whole of the night which followed the battle of Brienne, the French kept retiring in two directions beyond the rivers Aube and Voire, on the banks of which they left strong rear-guards to cover their retreat. At day-break, on the 21st January, the Emperor returned from Bar-sur-Aube to the field of battle, and going up to Sacken's corps, which was standing in column, thanked the officers and men, and then said to the General, "You have not only vanquished foreign enemies, but domestic too."

The order was now given for the troops to pursue the enemy. The Emperor and the King of Prussia kept up with the advancing columns. The Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and General Wrédé were not long in driving the enemy out of the town and castle of Brienne. On their retreat, the French obstinately defended the passage of the Aube and the Voire, in order to gain time, and a warm affair was the consequence. Bullets were falling thick about the Emperor, while Count Wrédé was vainly imploring His Majesty to retire from so dangerous a spot. Seeing that his

entreaties produced no effect, Wrédé at last told him, that there was nothing left for himself to do, but to quit the field of battle. Just then, however, there came on a remarkably heavy snow shower, which at once put an end both to the fire of musketry and the cannonade, and hid the enemy's movements. The combat was now closed, and the sovereigns proceeded to the castle of Brienne, which, having been for some days the theatre of hostilities, presented a picture of destruction inseparable from war. A fine library and a collection of precious manuscripts and objects of natural history, had not been spared by the French or the allied troops. The books and manuscripts had been thrown out of the windows and used to kindle the fires of the bivouacs. On the arrival of the allied monarchs, order was instantly restored.

Their majesties wishing to consult with the commanders-in-chief, invited to the castle Prince Schwarzenberg, Count Barclay, and Blücher, and spent some time in planning the ulterior movements of the armies. It was at last resolved, that the army of Silesia and the Grand Army should separate, and that Blücher should set out for Chalons, form a junction with the corps of Langeron, York, and Kleist, and then, following the Marne, advance on Paris through Meaux. The Grand Army was likewise to march on the capital through Troyes and along both banks of the Seine. The motive which led to this separation, was an apprehension of the troops suffering from the want of supplies if they remained together; indeed, some difficulty in procuring provisions, and especially forage, had already begun to be felt. The council being over, the Emperor returned to Bar-sur-Aube, where he

remained three days, and from whence, on the 24th January, he removed to Bar-sur-Seine.

The pursuit of the enemy was not kept up with sufficient spirit. In the affairs of the rear-guards at Lesmont and Rosnay, a whole day was lost, and Napoleon had time to gain a march on the Allies. In the advanced guard were the Austrians, Wirtembergers, and Bavarians, who so tardily pursued their beaten enemy, that they at last fairly lost sight of him. Two days actually elapsed before Prince Schwarzenberg knew whether the French had taken the road to Troyes, Arcis, or Chalons. In order to obtain certain information of the enemy's motions, the Emperor sent forward the light cavalry division of the guards, under the General Aide-de-Camp Count Ojaroffsky, who reported that the corps of Mortier alone was drawing off towards Arcis, and that Napoleon, with his whole forces, had marched through Piney in the direction of Troyes. This report did not convince the Field Marshal, who waited for its confirmation; and thus it was not before he had received a second report from Count Ojaroffsky, of the same tenor with the first, that he gave orders to continue the advance.

Prince Schwarzenberg thought that Napoleon would defend himself in Troyes; drawing this conclusion from the circumstance of the French having surrounded the town with new palisades. Napoleon, however, did not halt at Troyes, but retired on Nogent, of which a report was immediately sent in by the partizan Soslavin. Again the Prince refused to give credit to this important intelligence, and ordered, for the 25th, a general reconnoissance of the enemy who were posted around Troyes; thus another day was lost.

Even this order was recalled, and instead of the proposed movements, the Field Marshal resolved, on the 26th January, with all his forces to attack the French by both banks of the Seine, at Troyes, where there was now but a slender rear-guard unmolested by any body. For this purpose, instructions, of three pages in length, were drawn up in the Austrian camp, ordering, among other things, that the troops should provide themselves with ladders and fascines.

The Emperor, who was at Bar-sur-Seine, had intended leaving that town in order to be present at the proposed attack. At eleven o'clock in the morning His Majesty's charger was at the door, when he received intelligence confirming Seslávin's report that Napoleon had evacuated the town the evening before, that is, on the 25th. The service of the advanced posts had been so carelessly performed by the Germans, that the first news Prince Schwarzenberg received, of Napoleon's retreat from Troyes, was not from his advanced troops, but from deserters.

The retreat down the Seine, by the Paris road, left the French without hope of further success. "The soldiers," says an eye-witness, "marched in silent sadness, such as it would be difficult to describe; they kept asking each other: where are we to halt?" This melancholy state of discouragement will easily be understood by the Russians, who shared in the campaign of 1812. Did we not hold the same language as we kept retreating from Vilno to Smolensk and beyond it? Did we not put the same questions to each other, in our eager desire to know on what spot of our fatherland we should be ordered to halt and offer resistance to the enemy?

When the Emperor received the report of the enemy having abandoned the head town of Champagne, his first thought was the preservation of the inhabitants from the horrors of war. With this view the chief of his staff, Prince Volkonsky, on the 26th January, wrote the following letter to Prince Schwarzenberg:—“I am commanded by His Majesty to thank your Highness for your report of the taking of Troyes. The Emperor does not wish that you should establish your head-quarters in that town to-day. It is His Majesty’s wish that you immediately send an express to the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, with orders to spare the town and to observe the strictest discipline. This seems to His Majesty to be the more necessary, that according to the averments of the inhabitants of this place, the French plundered Troyes themselves. In such circumstances the good conduct of our troops may greatly influence the general opinion, by showing the superiority of our discipline.”

Such were the apparent first-fruits of the victory of Brienne, among the most important of which must be reckoned the certainty of gaining possession of Paris. Preparatory dispositions to this end were made by the Emperor the moment he learned that Napoleon had abandoned Troyes without risking a battle. “I must tell you beforehand,” writes the Emperor, on the 26th January, to Field Marshal Blücher, “that His Majesty the King, and I, have in concert resolved, that in the event of the armies reaching Paris, the troops shall be quartered in the environs, and not in the capital. It is my wish that they should not enter it till the King and I come up, and that the corps which shall reach Paris with us may be the first to enter it. It will be highly

agreeable to me that this our mutual intention should be fully understood, and you will oblige me by causing it to be respected by the troops under your orders. Political considerations of the highest importance concur to render this measure indispensable.”

On the following day the Emperor left Bar-sur-Seine and reached Troyes, where several of the principal inhabitants immediately presented themselves in the name of their fellow-citizens, praying for the restoration of the Bourbons. The Emperor received them graciously, but gave them for answer, that their proceeding appeared to him to be premature ; that they were exposing their lives to danger ; and that before thinking of the Bourbons it would be necessary to vanquish Napoleon. The deputies, notwithstanding, mounted the white cockade, and one of them the order of St. Louis, the wearing of which, as well as the white cockade, had been prohibited in France, under the pain of death. Even during His Majesty's stay at Langres, the old nobility of the surrounding country had requested permission to arm a legion of volunteers on behalf of their former kings. The Emperor told them he would not throw obstacles in their way, but on condition that the legion should be formed in districts not occupied by the allied troops. From these circumstances it is plain, that the monarchs abstained from exercising immediate influence on the subject of a change of government in France.

More remarkable than these deputations, however, was the arrival at Troyes of a person who presented himself to Count Nesselrode, under the assumed name of Count St. Vincent, and handed to him a scrap of paper, on which the following words were written with

15th February. 1814



Luth. by L. M. Lefevre, Newman St.

sympathetic ink : “ La personne que je vous envoie est de toute confiance. Ecoutez-le et reconnoissez moi. Il est tems d’être plus clair. Vous marchez sur des béquilles. Servez-vous de vos jambes, et voulez ce que vous pouvez.” The pretended St. Vincent was the Marquis of Vitrolles, one of the most devoted adherents of the ancient dynasty, who had been sent from Paris by certain persons high in office, who were planning the overthrow of Napoleon. Even so early as the end of the preceding year, while the head-quarters of the allied sovereigns were still at Frankfort on the Maine, the same dignitaries had sent thither a confidential agent inviting them not to delay crossing the Rhine. This agent conducted himself with such circumspection, that one of His Majesty’s General Aid-de-camps, without once suspecting who he was, offered him a place in his calash, in which he travelled with him till they reached Nogent on the Seine. History will doubtless one day lay open the rise and progress of those secret machinations against Napoleon ; here we only allude to their existence, as a proof, that in France, an opinion had been gradually forming against him, who had sought after every kind of glory, but that of making himself the father of his people, and of employing for their good the extraordinary talents with which nature had endowed him. With regard to the information sent to our head-quarters by his enemies, prudence neither allowed us to despise it nor to treat it with particular attention. We may add, that Napoleon was still so strong, that these secret manœuvres, which were by no means encouraged by the Allies, could not shake his power ; the issue depended on the force of arms.

The Allies did not all share the Emperor Alexander's confident anticipation of speedily getting possession of Paris. This result, indeed, still depended on the chances of war, as to which each of them drew conclusions according to his conviction, and to his confidence in his own force. Their chief dread was, that on the taking of Paris, they should meet with innumerable difficulties in the administration of a populous capital. They could find no answer to the question: "What shall we do with it when we have it?" The very idea of the subjugation of Paris wrought upon their imagination, by its vastness and novelty, to such a degree, that the now probable invasion of that capital, instead of exciting them to make a grand effort to crown their former victories, to reap the fruits of their sacrifices, to wipe out the stains of many defeats, and to realize that hope in which Europe was waiting the decision of her fate,—was considered by them as an additional motive to a speedy conclusion of peace. Alexander thought otherwise than did his allies, and regarded the taking of Paris as a circumstance which could not be accompanied with any difficulties of a peculiar kind. In this respect the results justified his sagacity; but in January few were of his opinion.

With the view of removing the pretended difficulties of this important enterprize, to turn it to the greatest possible advantage to the cause of the Allies, and to put an end to all misunderstandings, different plans were drawn up, showing the line of conduct to be pursued by the Allies on becoming masters of Paris. These plans, however, remained in the shape of mere projects, and were not signed by any body; for this reason, that at this very time Austria, England and

Prussia, notwithstanding the opinion of the Emperor Alexander, persisted more firmly than ever, in their intention of bringing the war to a close. Yet we may be allowed to state in a few words, that the substance of the projects in question was, that having entered Paris, nothing should be taken by right of conquest—that there should be no interference with the domestic affairs of France—and, if peace should not have been by that time concluded with Napoleon, to sign it on the conditions proposed at Châtillon; provided always that the general voice of the capital should not proclaim the Bourbons, and thus deprive Napoleon of the possibility of giving the necessary pledges for the peace. Finally, the allied sovereigns, as a mark of their particular respect for the Emperor Alexander, reserved to His Majesty the nomination of the Governor-General.

While the ideas of the Emperor Alexander were exclusively bent on the taking of Paris, and while in imagination, he was planting the standard of Russia on the towers of the enemy's capital, those of the Allies, who were most inclined to peace, considering it as indispensable, availed themselves of an unexpected occurrence as a pretext for persisting in their opinions. Hardly was the despatch to Field Marshal Blücher sent off on the 26th January, containing a preliminary order as to the advance of the Silesian army on Paris, when Prince Schwarzenberg received a communication from Caulaincourt, then at Châtillon, in which he announced his readiness to sign the peace, if an armistice proposed by him should be accepted. The circumstances which gave rise to this letter are so intimately con-

nected with what was passing at Châtillon, that before quoting it, we must turn to the Congress.

The ministers of the Allied powers quitted Langres for Châtillon, at the same time that the Emperor left it for Chaumont, on learning that Napoleon in person was beginning the campaign, and there they found Caulaincourt who had been some days waiting their arrival. At the first sitting on the 24th January, Caulaincourt displayed the greatest impatience to hurry over the usual preliminary business of the verification of the respective powers, and would even have it dispensed with, desiring to know on the instant, in what the demands of the Allies actually consisted. This curiosity, very intelligible in his situation, was not gratified on the first day. At the second sitting on the 26th January, Count Stadion, in the name of the plenipotentiaries, announced to him the will of the allied monarchs, to wit: to leave France the boundaries which she had in 1792. The French plenipotentiary answered: "*mon rôle est celui des sacrifices,*" adding, that he was ready to agree to this condition, provided he received immediate communication, without exception, of all the cessions required of France, and were informed for whom the countries to be ceded was destined. Count Razumofsky objected, that the balance of power, after many shocks, having been at length completely destroyed, its reconstruction now formed the object of the active exertions of the courts, and that Caulaincourt's question had therefore no relation whatever to what was now demanded of France. Each of the other ministers in his turn affirmed it to be the unalterable resolution of the powers to enter upon no discussion whatever, till the French govern-

ment should have previously agreed to accept of the frontiers of 1792. After a short silence, Caulaincourt whose countenance betrayed his chagrin, requested some hours for reflection. The sitting was suspended till the evening ; but when the ministers met again at the appointed time, the French plenipotentiary without touching the subject which had been under discussion in the morning, spoke of the proposals which had been made to Count St. Aignan at Frankfort on the Maine at the close of the preceding year, the basis of which was, that the boundaries of France should be the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees. He then enlarged on the necessity of his knowing the totality of the demands and intentions of the Allied Courts, with reference to the cessions now demanded. He was answered that the proposals made to Baron St. Aignan were foreign to the discussions, no allusion to them being found in the instructions of the plenipotentiaries ; and Count Razumofsky added, that if such extraneous matter were introduced, he should have to request fresh orders from his Court. On this occasion he acted agreeably to the commands he had received from His Majesty, which were to gain as much time as possible. These orders had been repeated in stronger terms after the battle of Brienne. This policy, however, did not harmonize with the instructions of the other plenipotentiaries, who had been ordered by their Courts to conclude a peace without delay.

The first sittings of the Congress were spent in these fruitless discussions, in the course of which it was evident that Caulaincourt was contending with himself. On the one hand, the conditions of the Allies appeared to him to be oppressive, and on the other, he seemed

ready to agree to any thing, if the Allies would only make peace with Napoleon. As a private individual he ardently desired the conclusion of the war, provided Napoleon, to whom he owed his elevation, honours, and estates, remained on the throne; but in his capacity of minister, he hesitated to confirm with his signature, conditions which were humiliating to his country. His situation was now the more critical that for some time he had not heard from his Court; the natural inference from this silence being, that after the battle of Brienne, Napoleon's affairs were in a worse condition than they afterwards proved to have been. In order to gain time, and if possible to discover the precise nature of the ultimate demands of the Allies, he resolved to request an armistice addressing his application to Prince Metternich, with whom, during the whole time the Congress lasted, he carried on a confidential correspondence in writing. The contents of his letter were as follows:—"It is my intention to ask the plenipotentiaries if they will agree to grant an armistice, provided France shall comply with their demands on the subject of the frontiers. I am ready to make this sacrifice, if the armistice can be signed immediately. On this condition I will even deliver up several fortresses in the countries to be ceded, but I am ignorant whether the ministers have full powers to give a satisfactory answer to my question and to conclude the armistice. If they have not, there is nobody who can do more than your Highness to procure it for them. The reasons which induce me to request you to lend your aid, seem to me to be of importance not to France alone. I entreat your Highness to lay this letter before Her Majesty's father: let him

see the sacrifices we are ready to make, and then decide.”

The drift of the French diplomacy was evident in this letter. Indeed it was neither the first time nor the last that attempts were made, by insinuations of various kinds, to detach the Court of Vienna from the Alliance. To the honour of the Emperor Francis, he turned a deaf ear to them all. The purport of the letter in question having been communicated to the other plenipotentiaries, England, Austria, and Prussia consented to the armistice. They only stipulated that Napoleon should previously place some fortresses in their hands as a pledge that he would no longer oppose the conclusion of a peace on the conditions of France accepting the frontiers of 1792. These Powers knowing the Emperor Alexander's reluctance to treat with Napoleon, resolved, by a minute entered in the protocol, to request His Majesty to issue his commands to Count Razumofsky to sign. At the same time, each of their leading ministers, Lord Castlereagh and Princes Metternich and Hardenberg, stated in writing his opinion on the question of continuing or closing the war. Considering the state of affairs, both in a political and military point of view, they unanimously came to this conclusion, that the object of the treaty of alliance, signed in the preceding year, had been gained, and that the time had arrived, when, for the welfare of Europe, it was expedient to come to terms with Napoleon. They stated that their courts desired, and were ready to conclude on the terms agreed to, and insisted on the necessity of doing so. Here for the first time, since the treaty of alliance with Prussia was signed at Kálisch in 1813, occurred a

difference of opinion between her Cabinet and the Emperor Alexander.

We must leave it to time and foreign historians to lay open in detail the views of those three statesmen and the considerations which led to the orders they had received to insist on peace. Nor shall we attempt to calculate the probable consequences of a peace by which Napoleon would have continued to rule over France. To the Russian belongs only the pleasing and consoling duty of showing, what were at this time the ideas of the Emperor Alexander. Happy is he, who in narrating the great events on which hang the destiny of nations, frequently meets with occasions that fill him with deep and reverential feelings of admiration towards his sovereign !

The opinion of the Emperor Alexander communicated to the Allied Sovereigns at Troyes, on the third of February was as follows :

“ I have attentively considered the answers of the Austrian, English, and Prussian ministers to the questions submitted to them.

“ As the first of these questions has for its aim to define the object for which we are waging war, I think it necessary on this head to enter into historical and frank explanations.

“ It is known to the allied courts in what circumstances I had recourse to arms in order to oppose the attempted conquest of my empire, and how the enemy, after suffering incalculable losses, was driven out of it. This event immediately ensured the safety of Russia ; but counting for little the tranquillity which would have followed a temporary peace with France, I resolved to undertake the deliverance of Europe.

Neither the dangers inseparable from a war, the theatre of which lay far beyond the frontiers, nor the difficulties which hindered the other Powers from uniting with Russia, nor selfish and timid counsels could shake my resolution.

“ The accession of Prussia to the alliance with Russia, began to justify my hopes. From the instant that Power resolved to unite her troops with the Russians, it behoved that the immediate object of the war be kept in just proportion with our success and our means ; and on this principle, the treaty of alliance was necessarily based. The accession of Austria was necessary to perfect an alliance indispensable to the welfare of Europe ; but the deliberate march of the Court of Vienna gave the enemy time to take the field with powerful forces in the centre of Germany, then under his yoke. In the mean time, we had to choose between two measures,—to fight or to retreat ;—in the latter case, abandoning Saxony and Silesia, at the least, to the enemy without a struggle, and, without having made any effort whatever, deceiving the hopes of Germany. The King of Prussia and I resolved to follow the dictates of honour. Fortune was not altogether favourable to us, but the unshaken firmness displayed by us in the day of failure, engendered new combinations, which allowed Austria to take measures for uniting with Russia and Prussia.

“ In the beginning of this coalition, offers of peace were made to France. My opinion on this subject is known to the Allies. I maintained that such a peace would not lead to an end worthy of the sacrifices we had made, and the relative advantage of our position. I was told that the chances of war might turn against

our demands, which we could only make good by force of arms ; but I insisted that the dangers of a struggle which offered but a probability of success, were preferable to a peace, which would leave Europe in chains. The result was our fortunate alliance, to which, under Providence, we are indebted for all the successes we have obtained. Yet, when Austria resolved to unite with Russia and Prussia, victory was still doubtful : the object of the war was, therefore, necessarily limited by the condition of our affairs at the time, and on that basis our mutual obligations were framed.

“ Victory having brought us to Frankfort, the Allies offered to France conditions of peace, which they *then* considered as proportionate to the successes they had obtained ; at that period *these* conditions might have been called *the object of the war*.

“ And here it is to me an agreeable subject of recollection, how strongly I opposed hurrying into negotiations. I more than once rejected proposals of this nature, not because I did not wish for peace, but because I had calculated that time must offer us more favourable occasions, when we had proved to the enemy our superiority over him. The Allies have now good reason to be satisfied with what I did ; for to it we are indebted for all the incalculable advantages arising from the difference between the conditions proposed at Frankfort and at Châtillon, that is, the restoration by France of territories, without which Holland, Germany, and Italy would be lost on the first offensive movement.

“ The detail of these events clearly shows that the object of the war was never accurately defined, and that it has all along changed with circumstances.

“ With reference to the point which we have now reached, I am of opinion, that the position which the contending armies are in at present, does not allow us to contemplate any other consequences, but those which may result from a continuance of the war. Arrangements of any other kind would require so much time to carry into complete execution, that the enemy might, in the course of it, refuse to keep his promises ; especially if he should gain time enough to assemble forces, and strengthen the general opinion, now vacillating, of his personal destiny. The destruction of his political power does not constitute the grand aim of the efforts which it remains for us to make ; but it may become so, if the fortune of war, the example of Paris, and the evident inclinations of the inhabitants of the provinces of France, shall give the Allies the possibility of openly proclaiming it.

“ I do not share the opinion of the Allies on the greater or less degree of importance attached by them to the dethronement of Napoleon, if that measure can be justified on grounds of wisdom. On the contrary, I should consider that event as the completion of the deliverance of Europe, as the brightest example of justice and morality it is possible to display to the universe ; and, finally, as the happiest event for France, whose internal condition can never be without influence on the tranquillity of her neighbours.

“ Nobody is more convinced than I am of the inconstancy of fortune in war ; yet I do not reckon a partial failure, or even the loss of a battle, as a misfortune which could in one day deprive us of the fruits of our victories. I have long reflected on our situation,

and I am now convinced, that the skill of our generals, the valour of our troops,—our superiority in cavalry,—the reinforcements which are following us, and the force of public opinion animating the nations, would never allow us to fall so low, as some may think.

“ In this respect the only danger to be dreaded is, that the fear expressed in the opinions which have been submitted to me, may be communicated to the troops ; but they have given us so many proofs of undaunted resolution, that such impressions cannot, I hope, have any influence over them.

“ As to the difficulties which might result from the taking of Paris, I believe them to be over-rated : the capital will not neglect to take means for its own preservation and security. To render this easy, we have only to decide conscientiously on the measures necessary for its tranquillity. What reason have we to presume that we shall find Paris in a state of anarchy ?

“ I am by no means against continuing the negotiations at Châtillon, or giving Caulaincourt an answer to his last query, and even the explanations he desires on the subject of the future destiny of Europe, provided France shall agree to return to her old frontiers. With respect to the answer in question, the Allies may concert it in conformity with the arrangement made in relation to this subject, at Langres.

“ With reference to the armistice requested by the letter to Prince Metternich, I conceive this proceeding of the French plenipotentiary to be contrary to the existing usages of negotiations. It is not difficult to perceive the enemy's drift in this infraction of received

rules. To agree to negotiate on so important a subject would be to connive at his designs. As to the substance of his demand, I am of opinion, that in the present circumstances, an armistice would be of advantage only to the enemy, and that we should not stop short at the sight of snares which will become more dangerous, when time shall have given Napoleon new means of gaining strength and of breaking his promises. The most effectual of these means consists in assuring the French that their present monarch is to continue to rule them with full sway. Their conviction of this will inevitably rouse them to assemble round him with a promptitude excited by fear and a wish to exculpate themselves from the charge of that indifference and aversion which they have hitherto shown to take up arms in a general rising.

“ I am still as much convinced as ever, that all probability is in favour of a successful issue, if the Allies unanimously keep to the views and obligations by which they have hitherto been guided with reference to their grand object, *the destruction of the enemy's armies*. With a good understanding among themselves their success will be complete, and checks will be easily borne. I do not think that the time is yet arrived for us to stop short, and I trust, that, as in former conjunctures, new events will show us when that time shall have arrived.”

The lucid and convincing arguments of this opinion, which may well be regarded as an imperishable monument of the deep and sound political combinations of the Emperor Alexander, could not shake the resolution of the Allies to conclude the peace. They only agreed with the Emperor in the uselessness of an

armistice, which, as we have already seen, they had been willing to grant on receiving Caulaincourt's letter. The leading ministers of the foreign courts personally waited on His Majesty, and the Emperor had long discussions with them which occasionally assumed so warm a complexion as to produce a change in the habitual expression of his features. Seeing nothing to encourage the hope of a change in the disposition of the courts to bring the war to a close, and being convinced that further opposition would draw after it the rupture of the alliance, the Emperor insisted no farther; and on that very day, the 3d February, issued his commands to Count Razumofsky, to sign the peace on the conditions which had been offered to the Cabinet of the Tuileries at the opening of the Congress of Châtillon.

The extraordinary resistance of the Allies to the irrefragable arguments of the Emperor Alexander may perhaps be in some degree accounted for by the circumstance, that on the very day on which His Majesty's opinion was communicated to them, the news reached Troyes of Napoleon's march against the Silesian army and of Olsoofief's defeat at Champaubert. It will be shown in the sequel, that this circumstance, though certainly unfavourable to the arms of the Allies, was far from being a sufficient motive for hurrying on the negociations to a close. This the Emperor fully comprehended, and doubted as little as ever of the successful issue of the war. The following note, written in French with his own hand, in this painful crisis, will show the nature of his ideas better than any words of mine. On the 3d February, when signifying his commands

to Count Nesselrode, he added the following words which we here translate from the original:—"The whole of our Grand Army is still in the enemy's rear, and, if we act with skill and resolution, affairs may still take the happiest turn."

CHAPTER VI.

Advances of the Grand Army.—Movements of Blücher.—The Army of Silesia.—Movements of Napoleon.—Affair at Champaubert.—Olsoosief taken prisoner, and defeat of the Russians.—Dialogue between Napoleon and Poltorasky.—Conduct of Blücher.—Affair at Montmirail and Vauchamp.—Taking of Soissons.

THE discussions on the terms of peace had continued for a whole week, in the course of which the affairs of the campaign had assumed an entirely different aspect. The wasting of several days after the battle of Brienne, and the tardy occupation of Troyes, were doubtless a loss to us; but it might have been recovered, if, after entering Troyes, the pursuit of Napoleon had been pushed with vigour. So far from this, however, Prince Schwarzenberg, for reasons which we shall afterwards notice, first put his army into cantonments, contenting himself with sending forward the corps of Witgenstein and Wrédé, and then moved the Grand Army at the slowest pace down the Seine to Méry, Nogent, Sens, and Montéreau. The only offensive operations were the sending of the Ataman Platoff, and Major-General Soslavin to reconnoitre in the direction of Orleans and Fontainebleau. At the same time Lieutenant-General Diebitch, with the light cavalry division of the Guards, and a brigade of grenadiers, and the Emperor's aide-de-camp, Prince Lubomirsky, were sent to Sézanne, in order to keep up the communications with Field

Marshal Blücher, who was on his march from Brienne to Chalons.

After evacuating Troyes, Napoleon retreated unmolested to Nogent, fortified that place, and stood with his whole army on the right bank of the Seine, waiting to see what the Allies would undertake, and then to regulate his movements by the nature of their operations. His left wing had been turned by Blücher, and his right by the Grand Army, which was now not more than a hundred versts distant from Paris. Napoleon directed every thought to the saving of the capital, and his chief hope was founded on the arrival of the veteran troops from Spain, which, for greater despatch, were being conveyed to Nogent in carts. These troops, who had gained experience of war and could bear its hardships, were to be considered as his last bulwark; for he could not depend on the new levies, which, besides their incapacity to support the hardships of a campaign during a severe winter, often abandoned their colours and even plundered their countrymen, as our readers may see from an order issued to the French army on the 27th January, in which, among other things, it is said, “The Emperor has to express his displeasure to the army at the excesses to which it abandons itself. Such excesses are always hurtful, but they become criminal when committed in our native country. From this day forward, the chiefs of corps and the generals shall be held exclusively responsible for them. The inhabitants are flying on every side, and the troops, instead of being their country’s defenders, are becoming its scourge.” The number of Napoleon’s troops being too small to justify him in risking a general engage-

ment with either of the allied armies, there remained but the expedient of trying to beat them in detail. The operations of Blücher now afforded him a favourable opportunity for doing so.

While the Grand Army was almost insensibly moving down the Seine from Troyes, Blücher, with the corps of Sacken and Olsoofief, marched from the field of battle at Brienne through St. Ouen on the road to Chalons, with the intention of uniting, about Vertus, with the remaining corps of the army of Silesia; to wit, that of General York and those of Kleist and Kaptsevitch which were advancing from the Rhine: on effecting this junction, he was to march on Paris. Of these three generals, York was the nearest to the theatre of war. He had been lying in the neighbourhood of Chalons, close to which was the grand park of the French army, covered by the corps of Macdonald, who was on his way from Dusseldorf to join Napoleon. After a rather hot affair, York had made himself master of Chalons on the 24th January, and Macdonald retired to Epernay. Blücher having got intelligence of this, resolved to cut off the Marshal's retreat near La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, at the meeting of the two great roads leading from Chalons to Paris; or, if this were impossible, to force him to yield up a part of the park which he was escorting to Paris, consisting of upwards of a hundred guns dragged by peasants' horses. We would direct the particular attention of our readers to this enterprize of Blücher's, as it will explain the causes of the dissemination of the Silesian army, and the important results which that measure drew after it.

In execution of his plan, Blücher ordered General York to follow Macdonald by the road to Epernay and

Château Thierry, and despatched Sacken's corps through Bergères and Montmirail. The latter was followed at the distance of one day's march, by Olsoofief, who was directed to halt at Champaubert till he should receive further orders. The Field Marshal himself halted at Vertus to wait for the coming up of the corps of Kleist and Kaptsévitch which were hourly expected at Chalons. With these he purposed marching to Champaubert, where he was to be joined by Olsoofief, and with all these troops forming a reserve to the corps of Sacken and York, to push on to Paris. At the same time he hastily fortified Vitry, to secure, in all events, his retreat, never thinking that danger was threatening him from the left. On that side he was the more tranquil, that the Grand Army was there ; and as had been agreed on at Brienne, must be vigorously pressing the vanquished enemy. Besides, the very nature of the locality seemed to secure the left wing of the corps under his command. It was covered by the marshy banks of the Petit-Morin, which rises not far from Champaubert, and flowing through Montmirail, falls into the Marne at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre.

The army of Silesia, spread over a wide extent of country, was lying on the 28th of January at the following places. The commander-in-chief, almost without troops, was at Vertus ; Kleist and Kaptsévitch were between Chalons and Vertus ; Olsoofief was at Champaubert ; York near Château-Thierry ; and between Montmirail and La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, Sacken, whose advanced-guard, under Vassiltchikof, was already at Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and beyond it, on the road to Meaux, whither Macdonald had retired after destroying

the bridges of the Marne. The advance of the Silesian army to Meaux, the approach of the Grand Army to the Seine, and the appearance of Count Platoff and Soslavin at Melun, Sens and Nemours, the arrival of Wintzengerode at Laon, from whence Chérnischeff was already leading his advanced-guard to Soissons, excited the greatest alarm for the safety of the capital among the chief men in office at Paris. Preparations were begun for removing the public money, the secret papers of the ministers, and the most valuable of the pictures and statues. Couriers and expresses, hourly sent to Napoleon, informed him of these apprehensions; and Macdonald reported that he had not been able to keep the enemy in check, and that, forced to retreat, he had reached Meaux, distant only three short marches from Paris. At the same time, Napoleon received from Caulaincourt a report of the terms offered him at Châtillon, which stipulated that France should retire within the frontiers of 1792.

After reading the despatches from Paris and Châtillon, Napoleon kept a long silence, but at last gave the following answer to those around him, who were endeavouring to persuade him to make peace: "What should I be in the eyes of the French, were I to put my signature to their humiliation? What should I say to the republicans in the senate, when they demanded our former boundary of the Rhine? I reject such a peace." He then threw himself on a camp bed, but sleep fled his eyes. The minister of foreign affairs, who spent the greater part of the night with him, succeeded, by unceasing entreaties, in softening him, and received permission to write to Caulaincourt

in such terms as might give him a chance of drawing out the negotiations ; for it was Napoleon's wish, that the terms of the Allies should be laid before the Privy Council at Paris. In the meanwhile, as they were preparing the despatches for Châtillon, Napoleon, who had his eyes constantly fixed on the map of Champagne lying before him, received intelligence of the loose movements of the corps of the Silesian armies. At this moment the minister presented the answer, which his master had allowed to be sent to Caulaincourt. " That is not the affair now in hand," said Napoleon to him ; " with my eye I am beating Blücher, who is marching by the Montmirail road. I will march against him, beat him to-morrow, and after to-morrow, if I succeed in my attempt, affairs will wear quite a new face, and then we shall see what is to be done." He then ordered word to be sent to Marshal Macdonald and to his brother Joseph, that he was on the way to their assistance.

Leaving the corps of Oudinot and Victor at Provins and Nangiz, with orders to defend the passage of the Seine to the last extremity, Napoleon, with the guard and the corps of Marmont, Ney and Mortier, marched through Villenauxe on Sézanne, resolved to fall upon the first troops of the Silesian army he should meet with. On reaching Sézanne, he at first hesitated whether he should march by the left on Montmirail, or straight through Champaubert to the great Chalons road ; but having received certain information from his spies of the positions of the Prussian army, he proceeded towards Champaubert by roads which, at that season of the year, were considered impassable. As for the artillery, the inhabitants furnished horses which

drew the guns with great difficulty through the woods and marshes, then covered with a thin crust of ice which continually gave way. Marshal Marmont, who headed the march, returned back with his corps, declaring that it was impossible to advance by such roads ; but Napoleon angrily stopped him, and ordered the advance to go on, cost what it might.

The French army having passed the night at the village of St. Priest, set out on the morning of the 29th January, and the advanced-guard soon came in view of General Olsoofief, who, in execution of the Field Marshal's orders, was advancing in full confidence of security to Champaubert. He could the less anticipate the storm that was soon to burst over his head, that by these instructions he was to take up his quarters for some days in and about Champaubert, in order to give his troops time to recover from the fatigues and losses at Brienne, which had reduced the corps so low, that it now numbered only 3,690 infantry, with 24 pieces of artillery, and sixteen men acting as mounted expresses. A part of this detachment, which still bore the name of corps, had already reached Champaubert ; the soldiers had begun to boil their porridge, and the quarter-masters had set off to the adjoining villages. At this moment the commander of the corps received intelligence of the arrival of the French in considerable force. Desiring to know their number, he ordered General Udom, with a brigade of light infantry, to occupy the village of Bayé, which lies in advance of Champaubert, on the road to Sézanne. The light infantry drove the French skirmishers out of it ; but the enemy's columns quickly showed themselves, and attacked in such force, that

Udom sent for a reinforcement. He reported to the commander that the enemy's numbers kept constantly increasing, and that they had brought up 12 guns. Another brigade and six pieces of cannon were immediately sent to support Udom.

About nine o'clock the engagement became very warm. Olsoofief now sent orders for the quarter-masters to return; the kettles were emptied, and the superfluous baggage sent off to Etoges. The remaining troops received orders to prepare for action, and were marched to Bayé. At one o'clock he called a council of the generals, heavy columns being now seen, which, before reaching Bayé, divided to right and left with the view of completely surrounding Champaubert. The generals proposed an immediate retreat to Etoges, through which the road passes to Vertus, where the head-quarters of Blücher then were; but Olsoofief answered that he could not consent, having been ordered to maintain himself in the position of Champaubert. He added, perhaps with the intention of encouraging those under him, that Kaptsevitch and Kleist were at Sézanne, from whence they would probably arrive in time to act on the rear of the French. In the meanwhile he sent off several expresses to let Blücher know of his situation, and of the prisoners having asserted that Napoleon was present in the field; but the Field Marshal always answered that his apprehensions were groundless, that Napoleon could not be present, and that the detachment acting against our troops, could not amount to more than 2,000 men commanded by some partizan. He farther confirmed his previous order to keep possession of Champaubert as being the connecting link between his army at

Vertus and Sacken's corps at Montmirail. By two o'clock Udom was driven out of Bayé, and the whole corps having gone into action, fought as skirmishers, forming a line three versts long. This concealed our weakness from the enemy, whose columns, during the whole morning, kept pouring out of the defiles of St. Gond. Our mounted scouts every minute brought word, that the French were approaching Champaubert on both sides, along the great road from Etoges to Montmirail. Olsoofief seeing that his communication with Blücher and Sacken was threatened to be cut off, gave orders for the corps to form in mass, to retire to Champaubert, and from thence to Etoges. Hardly had he sent off his twelve guns, when it became known that the enemy, having gone round the wood, had occupied the great road. Olsoofief now marched in person to attack them, and in the meantime ordered Major General Poltoratsky, with a brigade and nine guns, to defend himself in Champaubert.

Poltoratsky succeeded in reaching the village before the enemy, and having placed the guns in the cross ways, was rather successful in beating off the attacks of the enemy's cavalry ; but his ammunition beginning to fail, he was obliged to have recourse to the bayonet. In a short time, however, he was forced out of the village, when he began to retreat across the plain, in the hope of reaching a wood at the distance of two versts, and of defending himself there. His disorder could not be concealed from the enemy, who twice sent to desire him to surrender, but on receiving a refusal, redoubled the attack and brought up the horse artillery to play upon our troops which had formed in square. As he drew near the wood where he had

hoped to find shelter, Poltoratsky perceived that it was already in the hands of the French, who received him with a volley of musketry. The ranks of the square were quickly thinned by a heavy fire of grape, and by the attacks of the cavalry, whose impetuosity was increased by the conviction of certain success. The Russians kept falling, one after another, watering with blood every step of the disputed ground, but the moment of their inevitable destruction could not be delayed. The men being at length fairly exhausted in a combat in which the enemy were as ten to one, Poltoratsky was completely overpowered, and with his nine guns, taken prisoner.

Olsoofief who had intended to retire on Etoges with a great part of the corps, finding the road occupied by the enemy, charged with the bayonet, but was unable to clear it of the French. Finding it impossible to force his way to Etoges, he struck off, to the left, in order to gain the village of Lacoré, by the cross roads. The darkness of the evening, and the deep mud through which the guns had to be dragged by the soldiers, retarded the movement, so that the enemy had time to surround the detachment, to press upon it with cavalry, and waste it by a heavy fire from their guns, which kept playing upon it from all sides. Our regiments, who had been in action the whole day, being now much exhausted, fired off their last cartridges and opened their way with the bayonet: at this moment the commander of the corps was made prisoner. General Cornélof, well known for his intrepidity, especially since his daring exploit at Shoomla in the year 1810, now took the command as the senior officer. "In this extremity," says he in his report," I agreed with Major

General Udom to defend myself to the last drop of my blood, and not to surrender. We got together the remains of the corps now reduced to two thousand men, and fifteen guns, and breaking through the enemy who surrounded us, made our way through the forest to the village of Portabinçon, having preserved our colours and our honour along with them."

Our loss on this day amounted to nearly two thousand killed and wounded, and nine pieces of cannon ; but in the bulletins in which Napoleon related the affair of Champaubert, it is said that the fruits of the victory were forty guns taken, six thousand prisoners, and the remainder drowned in ponds and lakes. With few alterations, this falsehood has found its way into every history of the war, and has been received with the less suspicion, that Olsoofief's division bearing the name of a corps, naturally led people to believe that it was far more numerous than we have shown it to have been. Not knowing that it consisted of less than four thousand men, they imagined that Napoleon had gained a brilliant victory.

Such is the true account of the consequences of the erroneous dispositions of Field Marshal Blücher, which led to the destruction of a Russian detachment, whose commander, guided by the rules of the service, blindly obeyed the orders he had received, by clinging for a whole day, with a handful of men, to the post assigned him. His duty was to march to Champaubert, where he was ordered to remain, and, if necessary, to lay down his life. Olsoofief could certainly never have imagined that Blücher had offered him, as it were, a prey to the French army ; and he does not deserve reproach for not knowing that he was engaging with

Napoleon's army, for Blücher himself was ignorant of the motions of the French. "Why," exclaim the Prussians, "did he not send out patrols to get information of the enemy?" For this plain reason, that the Field Marshal had sent off all the cavalry with General Sacken, and detached to Champaubert only sixteen convoy troopers, whom it was impossible, owing to their insignificant number, to send to any considerable distance, or in different directions. This very circumstance proves, that Blücher, who had, in his capacity of commander-in-chief, every means of procuring correct information, was so convinced of Olsoofief's safety, that he did not furnish him with cavalry, thinking that it would be superfluous in the detachment. Far more reasonable would it be to ask, why the Field Marshal, on receiving Olsoofief's report, that Napoleon was in person attacking him, ordered the detachment to hold out to the last extremity? That report, to which Blücher did not give credit, was the more deserving of his consideration, that Count Pahlen had that very morning sent him word, that Napoleon, with the main body of his troops, was on his way from the Seine to the Marne.

By combining and comparing these circumstances, we see how groundlessly the Prussian writers have blamed the conduct of our General. In their desire to justify Blücher, they lay the blame of the disaster on Olsoofief, who having received positive orders to keep possession of Champaubert, could not decline fighting. Blücher's glory will retain its lustre for ages, even if we allow that he made a few mistakes in the course of his brilliant military career. His laurels will not fade; and we do

homage to them with the greater pleasure that they were mostly bought with Russian blood.

Napoleon desiring to see Olsoofief, invited him to sup with him ; but as the General had difficulty in expressing himself in the French language, Napoleon sent for Poltoratsky. The following dialogue took place between them.

“ How many were you in the field to-day ? ”

“ 3690 men, and 24 guns.”

“ Nonsense ! that cannot be ; you had, at least, 18,000 men.”

“ A Russian officer does not speak nonsense. I have told the truth ; besides, there are other persons from whom you can learn the same thing ; then I hope you will be convinced that Russians do not lie.”

Napoleon scowled, and after a short silence said, “ If what you assert be true, it may be said to your honour, that Russians alone can fight so desperately. I would have pledged my head that you were, at least, 18,000.”

“ For all that I am a prisoner.”

“ What does that signify ? Your Emperor has fifty of my generals prisoners, and as good as you. But, granting that I have destroyed you without great honour, as my troops fought with yours a whole day, still the consequences of this affair are important to me ; and I will now tell you, that, as I have routed you to-day, I will annihilate Sacken to-morrow ; on Thursday, the whole of Witgenstein’s advanced guard ; on Friday, I will give Blücher a blow from which he will not recover, and then I hope to dictate a peace to your Alexander on the Vistula.”

“ That will be rather difficult.”

Napoleon then entered critically on the subject of the late campaigns, and after running over that of 1812, ended by saying, "Your old fox, Kutúsof, deceived me by his march on our flank." He carried his playful humour so far, that Poltoratsky now and then disputed with him, and among other things said, that the French had burned Moscow. This expression seemed unpleasant to Napoleon, who answered: "What! the French? That act of barbarity was the work of you Russians."

"When you took possession of Moscow, and when all order was at end, it may be said that both the French and the Russians burned it: but I must frankly tell you that Russians, so far from regretting the catastrophe, reflect with pride on the burning of their ancient capital, and can soon build a new one."

Napoleon continued to grow warmer, and said, "It was a barbarous deed, and a stain on the nation; I took Berlin, Madrid, and Vienna, and no such thing happened."

"The Russians don't repent of it, and are delighted with the results."

Napoleon stamped with his foot, and ordered the prisoner to leave the room.

During the dialogue Marshals Berthier, Ney, Marmont, and the minister of foreign affairs, Maret, stood by in the most respectful posture. Poltoratsky was making his way, accompanied by a colonel of gend'armes, through the bivouac of the guard which encircled the house occupied by Napoleon, when he heard somebody call out, "Where is the Russian prisoner?" It was the French General-aide-de-camp Flahaut. He very politely requested him to return to

Napoleon, who, loading his prisoner with compliments, thus began his interrogatory :

“ What is the strength of the Russian guards and army ? Where is the Emperor and Generals ? ” naming many of them.

To all his questions he received one and the same answer : “ I don’t know.”

“ I had promised myself the pleasure,” continued Napoleon, “ of conversing with you on several matters, but your answer, ‘ I don’t know,’ hinders me. Why does your Emperor every where employ his own excellent troops, and not the Germans, whom I could annihilate in half an hour, while I have been fighting with you for a whole day ? ”

“ You ask me about the position of our army : that is a secret. To us the will of the Emperor is sacred, send us where he may. A gallant soldier says every thing that comes uppermost. Our oath to our Emperor and country forbids that.”

Here Napoleon, displaying an intercepted order from Blücher to Olsoofief, desiring him on no account to retire from Champaubert, exclaimed, “ There is your drunkard Blücher ! Did he know I was here ? Where I am, there are a hundred thousand more.” Poltoratsky still continuing his answers in the negative on the state of the army, was for the second time sent out of the room. Napoleon ordered him to be conveyed to Paris, and to be strictly watched.

By his success at Champaubert, Napoleon had cut the Silesian army in two. Sacken and York, who were at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre and Château Thierry, were completely separated from Blücher, who was at Vertus still waiting for Kaptsevitch and Kleist, to

whom he kept sending order upon order to hasten up. Napoleon could now at pleasure, and with assurance of success, fall on either half of the army ; that is, turn to the right against Blücher, or to the left against Sacken. He made choice of the latter, as promising greater advantages ; for Sacken, in the event of defeat, could only effect his retreat by Château Thierry and by crossing the Marne. It resulted necessarily from the successful execution of this manœuvre that Napoleon would be able to throw him out of the circle of the operations of the allied armies, and at the same time deliver Paris from danger. On the contrary, Blücher, if defeated, might retreat unmolested to Chalons, or even unite with the Grand Army.

Napoleon left the corps of Marshal Marmont before Etoges, to keep Blücher employed, and before day-break, on the 30th January, set off for Montmirail to meet Sacken, who had received an order from Blücher to return back from La-Ferté-sous-Jouarre through Montmirail, and to rejoin him at Vertus. He had sent him this order the day before, that is, on the morning of the day on which Olsoofief was attacked, and when he found that the enemy appeared to be approaching from Sézanne, he likewise ordered General York to form a junction with Sacken, and to throw a bridge over the Marne at Château Thierry for the army to cross by, in case it should not be able to offer effectual resistance to the enemy at Montmirail. When he gave this order, he was still of opinion that the troops which had left Sézanne were few in number ; so far was he from thinking that Napoleon had arrived from the banks of the Seine on the line of his communications. If he had known it, and had given full credit

to the reports of Count Pahlen and Olsoofief, he would certainly have changed his plans and have ordered Sacken and York instantly to cross the Marne, instead of marching on Montmirail where they must meet with Napoleon, and be sacrificed to his numerical superiority. Sacken too was convinced that the French who had appeared at Sézanne were insignificant in point of number, and he set out for Montmirail in the hope of beating them. He did not credit the report of General Karpoff of the Cossacks who had been left at Sézanne by General Vassiltchikof, and who wrote him that all the roads were covered with the enemy's troops, and that Napoleon was with them.

On the very day Napoleon moved from Champaubert to Montmirail, Sacken was on his way to it from La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. At Vieux-Maisons he received intelligence that Montmirail was occupied by the French, and that Napoleon had arrived there in the morning; but he treated the report as groundless, and continued his march. At nine o'clock in the morning of the 30th January the advanced guard came upon the enemy, and while the skirmishing was going on, the General formed his troops in the following order of battle. The centre was on the great road from La Ferté-sous-Jouarre to Montmirail; the right wing occupied the village of Marché near the river Petit-Morin, and the left took up its ground in the direction of the village of Fontenelle. Here Sacken expected to be joined by the Prussians, on whose co-operation he firmly relied, in consequence of York having been ordered to unite with him by that very disposition, in execution of which Sacken was now on his way to Montmirail. The affair had hardly begun, when the

Prussian general, Katsler, brought word that the advanced guard was at hand.

By degrees, as the French arrived from Champaubert at Montmirail, they marched out of the town, and the combat thickened, especially on Sacken's right wing in the village defended by the infantry of Prince Stcherbátov, whose place, on account of illness, had been taken by General Talizin. In a short time this village thrice changed masters. Napoleon purposely persisted in this attack, in order to attract the attention of General Sacken to the right, and then with his collected forces to fall upon his left wing, and by thus cutting off his junction with the Prussians, to deprive him of the means of effecting a retreat. General York now arrived, and reported that his infantry could not arrive for some time, and that he had been obliged to leave all his artillery at Château-Thierry, owing to the wretched state of the road from Vifort to Montmirail. It followed that, as at Brienne and Champaubert, the Russians alone were to bear the brunt of Napoleon's attack.

It was now one o'clock, and the battle had become general along the whole line; yet Napoleon had gained no ground. At three o'clock a Prussian brigade came in sight near Fontenelle, but without guns, for which reason two companies of Russian artillery were sent to join it. But considering that further resistance to an enemy superior in force would be vain, and being at last convinced by the assurance of a prisoner, a captain of the French guard, that Napoleon in person commanded the troops, General Sacken resolved to retire. As soon as the French perceived that he was evacuating Marché, they advanced against his centre, with

the intention of breaking his line of battle. Blood now flowed in torrents, and the French cavalry attacked with the greatest impetuosity; but having been charged and broken by Vassiltchikof, they did not venture to renew the attempt.

Our troops retired in order to Vifort, wading through mud which was so deep and thick that many of the men were obliged to cast off their shoes. Talizin, who from the right wing had to march a distance of three versts, succeeded in rejoining the corps, although the French did all they could to stop him. They only succeeded in cutting off the foot regiment of Sophia, which, after all, forced its way with the bayonet. The Prussians too began to retreat from Fontenelle, and as the Russian artillery which was with them, had been more in motion than in action, Sacken ordered General Nikétin to bring it into play. As soon as the Russian brigade, which was in front of the artillery, had passed it, a very heavy fire was opened from these guns; but, notwithstanding its terrible effects, the shock of the French was so heavy, that they several times forced the battery, and killed and wounded many of our officers and men with the bayonet.

Night put an end to the combat. Vassiltchikof was ordered to cover the retreat, and give the artillery every possible facility for retiring through the woods and morasses, which were almost impassable. The cavalry fastened long lines to the field-pieces, and the hussars and dragoons, fifty men to each gun, dragged them forward, and after a night of severe labour, reached Vifort at day-break. Fires had been kindled at the distance of three or four hundred yards from each other, which lighted the road, and enabled the

regiments to keep close to their colours. To aid the passage of the artillery, some torches, which were found in the possession of different companies, were lighted ; but after all General Vassiltchikof's exertions to save the artillery, it was found necessary to abandon eight guns, which had received more damage than the rest. During the night the corps continued its march to Château Thierry, and the rear-guard defended itself wherever the ground was favourable.

On the following morning, Napoleon left Montmirail for Château Thierry, where the Prussian General, Horn, with 24 squadrons, was ordered to keep the enemy in check, till the corps should have passed the Marne. He formed these troops in two lines of twelve squadrons each. Vassiltchikof and Lanskoy, who were standing on an eminence at a little distance, advised him to change his order of battle, from which it was vain to hope for success ; but the General did not listen to them, and left his troops as they were. All at once, the whole first line advanced to the attack. The French waited till it came to the proper distance, and routed it. These squadrons threw the second line into disorder, and galloped off pell-mell along with them in every direction over the plain. General Heidenrich's brigade of infantry, consisting of the regiments of Tamboff and Kostróma, happening to be at hand, immediately formed square, and kept the enemy in check by a fire of musketry, but they were ultimately broken : the General was made prisoner, and three pieces of cannon were taken. In the meanwhile, Sacken and York kept crossing the river, and by five o'clock in the afternoon, they were on the right bank of the Marne, and had cut away the bridge. Sacken's

loss on both days amounted to 5,000 men, being more than a third of his corps, which consisted of only 14,000 men (including 4,000 Prussians) under arms, in the beginning of the affair at Montmirail: the Prussians lost 850 men killed and wounded.

This battle, too, was represented by Napoleon as a complete victory gained over the whole Russian army, although his success went no farther than forcing Sacken to retreat. There can be no doubt, that if the latter had been less resolute, and less zealous in executing the orders he had received, he might have marched straight to Château Thierry without hindrance, and there have crossed the Marne. He would thus have avoided a bloody meeting with him who had so long been terrible to his opponents. By such a movement he would certainly have insured his own safety, but he would not have executed the orders of Blücher. We shall now put a question, the decision of which we shall leave to Sacken's accusers: "What would become of that highest military virtue, obedience, if subordinate commanders were allowed to modify, at pleasure, the dispositions of their superiors, and to retreat, merely because they were likely to meet with resistance on a march?" We shall conclude these reflections by quoting the words of a foreign writer, who says, "Sacken may have committed an error of judgment on this occasion; but still it was the error of a hero too confident of his own strength. We had few Generals equal to him: only such as *he* might hope to vanquish Napoleon."*

Napoleon had resolved to cross the Marne; but having received a report from Marshal Marmont, who

* Varnhagen von Ense's Life of Blücher.

was watching Blücher at Etoges, that the Allies were beginning to press upon him, he ordered Mortier to continue the pursuit of Sacken and York, and then hurried away with Marshal Ney and the guard to the relief of Marmont.

We left Blücher at Vertus, waiting for news of Sacken and York, and the coming up of the corps of Kaptsevitch and Kleist, who at length reached Etoges on the very day of the combat at Montmirail. Judging from the nature of his character, we may conclude that the days he passed here in a state of complete inaction, were among the most tiresome of his life. Reports of Napoleon's successes, exaggerated by the inhabitants, were hourly reaching him; he knew of Olsoofief's disaster,—and the distant roar of the artillery at Montmirail told him of Sacken's danger, while he could not advance one step to his aid, till the arrival of the corps, which were hourly expected, as well as of the cavalry with which he was totally unprovided. The number of troops at his immediate disposal was so small, that he dared not even fall upon Marmont, who was standing before him at Etoges, and whose corps, by the report of spies, was said to amount to 30,000 men. At length, Kaptsevitch and Kleist having arrived, and the remains of Olsoofief's corps, and two regiments of Prussian cuirassiers, having joined, Blücher, with 15,000 men under arms, set forward to make a diversion in favour of Sacken and York, of whose fate he had received no certain intelligence.

On the 1st February, Blücher pushed on to Etoges, driving the French out of it, and pursuing them through Champaubert to Fromenière; and, on the following

day, continued his advance along the road to Montmirail. Marmont, who had kept fighting and retreating, had already evacuated Vauchamps; but at the very moment the Allies were taking possession of that village, Napoleon appeared with his guard and a corps of cavalry, with which he had made a forced march from Château Thierry on learning that Marmont was attacked. They who never witnessed a combat, which Napoleon personally commanded and directed, can have but a faint idea of the magical effect produced by his presence on the spirit of a fight. The moment he appeared, the cavalry attacked with greater boldness and rapidity,—the skirmishers fell back, and gave place to deep columns of infantry,—the batteries were reinforced, and the fire became heavier,—Aide-de-camps galloped about in all directions,—and the air resounded with the cries of “En avant ! Vive l’Empereur !”

Marmont now halted and attacked the Prussian advanced guard of General Ziethen, who, having left the main body too far behind him, was forced to retreat in disorder to the position which Blücher had taken up. A few minutes had already elapsed, when a numerous body of cavalry charged the left wing, and having broken the Prussian cuirassiers, dashed on to attack the infantry;—but the Field Marshal having had time enough to form into squares, the charge failed. The French cavalry turned both his flanks, but were received with volleys from the squares, and the Prussian cuirassiers having again formed behind the infantry, returned to the attack.

Seeing the enemy’s superiority in numbers, which kept every minute increasing, and the resolution dis-

played in the attack, the Field Marshal had no doubt of Napoleon's arrival, of which he quickly received certain information from the prisoners. He had now nothing to think of but a retreat, and of the means of sustaining, with the least possible loss, the attacks which it was impossible to avoid.

The retreat began in squares, the artillery being placed in the intervals. Kaptsevitch commanded the left wing, and Kleist the right. From the hamlet of Janvilliers to Fromenières, where the wooded ground begins, each of the squares was several times attacked; but the infantry kept firing and retreating to Champaubert. The French cavalry would occasionally dash into the intervals of the squares, but they were always forced to retire with loss. Such was the coolness and steadiness of the squares in these critical circumstances, that a foreign writer assures us, that Blücher gazed with delight on the regularity and coolness of the movements which were executed by the Russians like the evolutions of a parade.* The attack was renewed with fresh vigour, as soon as the troops came out on the meadow near Champaubert. The horse turned the squares on all sides, approaching to the distance of a few paces. The way from Champaubert to Etoges had to be cleared by a continued fire of cannon, and musketry, and the bayonet. Beyond Etoges the cavalry could not pursue, and the infantry had now only half a verst to march in order to get out of danger. But hardly had the sun begun to set, when their hopes of escape vanished, for the French had made a circuit and occupied the road beyond the wood in great force, thus cutting off the retreat.

* Varnhagen von Ense, *Life of Blücher*, p. 362.

Total defeat now appeared to Blücher to be inevitable. His mighty heart shuddered at the thought, that not only himself, but Prince Augustus and the whole corps were on the point of being made prisoners. He now sought death, and stood in front of the squares in the thickest of the fire. "If you should be killed here," said his favourite aide-de-camp, Nostiz, to him; "do you really think that history will praise you for it?" The Field Marshal now turned his horse's head, and seeing the chief of his staff, Gneisenau, said to him, "If I do not perish to-day, then am I destined to live long; I still hope to be able to repair all."

There was nothing left for him but to fight his way. This was plain to all, from the Commander-in-chief to the meanest private. The drums beat and the martial sound roused every heart to the combat. The artillery and infantry turned their fire on the French who were posted on the high-road. Being unable to withstand it, the enemy abandoned the causeway, and confined themselves to attacks on the flanks and rear. Their dislodgement was rendered the easier by the fortunate circumstance that the troops of horse artillery, which formed part of the French detachment sent to occupy the Etoges road, had stuck fast in the mud, and could not reach the place appointed for them. In the confusion, however, two battalions of Prussians were thrown into disorder and made prisoners. The same fate threatened General Shenshin, whose memory as a man and an officer, will ever be dear to his fellow-soldiers. He was cut off with his brigade, consisting of the regiments of Archangel and Schlüsselburg, and though wounded by a grape-shot, continued to command till he had forced his way through the enemy,

when his strength failing him, he gave up the brigade to the senior officer. Lieutenant-Colonel Shushérin and Captain Vogt of the Horse Artillery, in the Field Marshal's presence, assembled and formed the cannoneers, and sabre in hand, charged right through the French cavalry, thus saving their guns.

But the affair was not yet ended, and a fresh trial was to come. At Etoges, which had been early taken possession of by the French, our troops were again met by their fire at ten o'clock in the evening, when it was quite dark. Again the battle raged for a short time. Firing and manœuvring were out of the question. In deep masses, and with loud hurrahs, the Allies rushed upon the enemy, trampled them under foot, and marching over their bodies, arrived in the night at Bergères. The pursuit was now at an end, and order was restored, as far as it could be restored, in the regiments. After a few hours' rest, the retreat was continued to Chalons, where the troops arrived on the 3d February. In this bloody affair fifteen guns were lost, and the killed, wounded, and prisoners amounted to 6,000: Among the last were Major-General Prince Urúsof. Of the guns taken by the enemy, nine were Russian.

Thus the army of Silesia, after advancing to Meaux, and being beaten at Champaubert, Montmirail, and on the road from Vauchamps to Etoges, was driven back partly beyond Château Thierry, and partly to Chalons. It is the general opinion that its misfortunes are to be ascribed to the separation of the armies after the battle of Brienne, and certainly it may be granted, that if the Allies, with their combined forces, had marched on Paris after that combat, it is probable that the move-

ment would have been crowned with success ; for the disorganized troops of Napoleon could not have made head against them. Yet Blücher's defeat should not be exclusively laid to the account of the separation of the armies. This measure would certainly have been faulty if either of them had been inferior to the French army, it being impossible, in the face of a superior enemy, to divide an army with impunity. But as Blücher and Prince Schwarzenberg were each separately stronger than Napoleon, they were warranted to choose separate lines of operation, which were even rendered necessary by the difficulty experienced in procuring supplies. Blücher, from his self-confidence and natural daring, strengthened by his successes of the preceding year, and the victory at Brienne, despised his enemy, and thought he should meet with no obstacles to his advance on Paris. On the road to the capital of France he was led away by the hope of cutting off Marshal Macdonald at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, or at least to capture the park which he was bringing up with him from Châlons. He sent against him two corps and all his cavalry, scattered his army over a great extent of country, without establishing due connexion between its parts, and did not cover it with flying and reconnoitring parties. It is impossible to justify his neglect in this respect, or his contempt of every measure of precaution, on the ground of his conviction that Napoleon, with the Grand Army upon him, would not venture on a decisive movement against that of Silesia,—and that, come what might, Prince Schwarzenberg would be always close at the enemy's heels. Napoleon, like a great general, availed himself of Blücher's blunders, and executed the only scientific

manœuvre in this campaign. It was a bright flash of his glory which had been dimmed by the campaigns of the two preceding years; but we shall soon see, that this momentary triumph did him ultimate injury, and that it may almost be regarded as one of the chief causes of his downfall.

On reaching Châlons, Blücher's anxious endeavour was to re-assemble his beaten army, and to lose no time in effecting a junction with Sacken and York, who having as we have seen, crossed the Marne at Château Thierry, were advancing on Ouchy by the great Soissons road, intending to march from thence by the right to Châlons, through Fismes and Reims. Marshal Mortier had been sent after them, and the Commandant of Soissons was ordered to leave as many men in the fortress as were necessary for its defence, and then to march out and do all he could to harass the retreat of our corps. If this order could have been carried into execution, it would have added still more to the difficulty of Sacken and York's movements, as they would thereby have found themselves between two fires, in a country covered with wood and intersected by narrow paths; for between Ouchy and Fismes there is no high-road. But at the very time the Commandant was preparing to execute the will of Napoleon, General Chernisheff, with the advanced guard of Wintzengerode's corps, suddenly appeared on the north side of Soissons, and took the town by assault. As this newly arrived corps which had hitherto been counted in the army of the North, now formed part of Blücher's army, and acted under his immediate command, it will be necessary to give the history of its separate operations till its junction with the army of Silesia.

We left General Wintzengerode after he had taken Namur. Differing with the Duke of Weimar and General Bülow on the question of joint operations, he had now only to comply with the will of the Emperor, by marching with all despatch to the Marne, in order to join the Grand and Silesian armies, which were then approaching Brienne. He therefore left Namur for Laon, from whence, according to circumstances, he could close up to Blücher through Reims, or marching through Soissons, threaten Paris. But as the road to Laon is defended by the five fortresses of Maubeuge, Avesnes, Philippeville, Givet, and Charlemont, it first behoved him to make himself master of one of them, in order to cover his line of communications and secure it from the incursions of the French who occupied the fortresses between the Sambre and the Meuse. At first he thought of Philippeville, whose inhabitants, as his spies assured him, were all disposed to open their gates to his troops. For this reason Baron Wintzengerode ordered General Chernisheff to make an attempt on that fortress. In a dark night of January, Chernisheff approached Philippeville, planted a battery on the glacis, and having opened his fire, summoned the town to surrender, but received a refusal. Having no ladders for an escalade, which indeed it would have been impossible to accomplish owing to the immense quantity of snow which had recently fallen, he gave up the attack, and marched to Avesnes.

This movement, executed between Beaumont and Binch, will occupy a place in military history ; for it was by the route now traced by General Chernisheff, that Field Marshals Wellington and Blücher advanced

to Paris after the victory at Waterloo. The reasons which induced him to march upon Avesnes, in preference to any other of the fortresses, was the intelligence he had received that the fortifications of this town, the work of Vauban, had fallen into disrepair, and that the garrison was feeble. In all events, it was necessary to act with the greatest promptitude in order to prevent the enemy from reinforcing the garrison with troops from the neighbouring towns. To conceal the true point of attack, General Chernisheff sent a detachment to Mons, and then, with the advanced guard making a forced night-march, appeared before Avesnes early in the morning of the 28th January. He immediately sent to demand the surrender of the town, and in the meantime placed his artillery, within musket shot, on the heights which commanded it. His sudden appearance and his threats frightened the Commandant, who yielded without opposition. Twenty guns and the garrison consisting of 200 men, besides 400 English and Spanish prisoners, were taken. The occupation of Avesnes by Chernisheff was important in this respect, that it served as a point of support to the operations of the corps, and gave security to its communications, thus rendering it safe to advance within the ancient limits of France. On the following day, after an insignificant affair with the national guard, Chernisheff entered Laon.

These operations made the deeper impression, that neither Napoleon nor the French expected that the Allies would enter France on this side, before effecting the conquest of the Netherlands, and especially of Antwerp. The conscription which had been going on by order of the government, was now put an end to ;

the national guards retired to their homes, and the inhabitants, tranquillized by the orderly conduct of the Russian troops, and intimidated by their successes, gave up all thoughts of taking arms, to which they had been excited by frequent proclamations, sent to them from Paris.

When he had taken possession of Laon, Wintzenge-
rode began to meditate various plans of operations which should lead to the speediest junction of his troops with the armies in the field. His position was the more embarrassing, as reports had begun to circulate among the inhabitants, of defeats sustained by the army of Silesia, of which he had not received official information. General Chernisheff represented to the commander of the corps that there was no room for hesitating in the choice of measures, and that without losing a moment he should march on Soissons, and take that fortress by assault; that this would be the very best diversion in favour of Blücher, as it would give an opportunity to attack Napoleon in flank, and by the taking of Soissons, inflict on him a heavy blow; that town, as the point where many great roads meet at the distance of only 80 versts from Paris, being considered as the bulwark of France on the north;—and further, that it had been fixed on to serve in place of a fortified camp for the training of the new levies. At first General Chernisheff's plan appeared too bold, the more so as it was known that Napoleon, on account of the great importance of Soissons, had entrusted its defence to General Rusca, one of his old companions in the Italian campaigns, who had 7,000 men under arms, and was therefore not likely to yield the fortress without the most determined resistance. Having weighed the danger of

the undertaking on the one side, and the advantages resulting from success on the other, Wintzengerode authorized General Chernisheff to march on Soissons, on the same conditions, however, which he had imposed on him at the passage of the Rhine, that is, to undertake the whole responsibility of a failure. He added, that to accomplish his enterprize, he could only allow him the troops of the advanced guard, reinforced by a company of artillery.

On the 1st February the detachment, numbering 4,200 men, set out for Soissons. When within three versts of the fortress, Colonel Benkendorf, who was in advance with the Cossacks, fell in with a thousand national guards, supported by regular infantry. The French immediately occupied the vineyards on the heights and began to skirmish. They might have defended this position for a considerable time, but being terrified by the charge and cries of the Cossacks, who now attacked them, the national guard and the regular infantry turned their backs, and instead of maintaining themselves in the village of Crouy, lying in the rear, sought safety under the walls of Soissons. Being overtaken in the plain by the Cossacks, they lost 28 officers, and 500 men made prisoners; and on the same evening their pursuers took up a position close to the town. General Chernisheff purposely kept back his regular troops, that his advance to the town on the following day might be the more unexpected, and thus prevent the commandant from taking the necessary measures for its defence. Soissons lies on the left bank of the river Aisne. On the right bank there is a bridge-head fortification surrounded by a deep ditch, and protected by the batteries on the

opposite side with which it is connected by a stone bridge. It follows that the town might be attacked in two ways ; that is, by throwing a bridge over the river, either above or below it, and acting on the left bank, or by storming the bridge-head, and from thence forcing a way into the town. General Chernisheff chose the latter, which, although it appeared the more difficult, was the speedier of the two. To throw a bridge over would have taken much time, which was now the more precious to us, that Napoleon, after defeating Blücher, might be hourly expected to reinforce the garrison.

The morning of the 2d February was employed in reconnoitring and in choosing the most favourable point of attack ; the city gate was fixed on, and arrangements made for breaking it open. According to the General's dispositions, the infantry was to advance by the high road, and the Cossacks on each side were ordered to close by their flanks to the river Aisne in order that the whole detachment, on reaching Soissons, might form a half-circle about the town. Six guns advanced in front of each of the Cossack regiments ; the infantry were followed by the regular cavalry, and two companies of light infantry, under the command of an active officer of the staff were detached, with orders to take possession of a public-house lying about ninety yards from the walls, to the right of the great road. The Cossacks on the right flank were commanded by Colonel Suchtelen, and those on the left by Colonel Benkendorf. While these preparations were making for the assault, General Chernisheff sent to the commandant of Soissons to demand the surrender of the town, desiring his aide-de-camp Shepping to exaggerate

the number of the assailants, as is usually done in such cases; but the commandant gave a decided refusal, adding that he was not to be so caught, and that he was aware of the slender force of our detachment.

The troops moved off their ground at nine o'clock in the morning, and began on all sides to approach the town. The enemy, as they came within range, at first fired with ball, and then with grape. Our artillery, acknowledged to be the best in Europe, having reached the place marked for it, opened its fire, and the two companies of light infantry soon made themselves masters of the public-house, and kept up a fire from the roof and windows. During these preliminary operations, the enemy evacuated the bridge-head which was almost untenable, owing to its dilapidated state. General Chernisheff now brought up the infantry to assault the city gate, but our men were repulsed; a second attempt was equally fruitless. While he was employed in reforming the troops and in preparing for a third assault, he remarked signs of sudden disorder on the city rampart. Though unable to divine the cause, he eagerly availed himself of so favourable a circumstance, and ordered two petards to be fastened to the gates, which partially blew them off the hinges. The light infantry then quickly advanced, and completed their destruction. Foot and horse now rushed on, and so vigorous was the attack, that the Russians, having forced their way into the town, succeeded in capturing many prisoners and guns in the streets. The number of the former, among whom were three generals, was 3,600, and that of the guns 14.

Such were the trophies of a successful assault which had lasted two hours, and in which our loss amounted

to 200 killed and wounded. It is worthy of notice as the distinguishing feature in the character of the troops led by the Emperor Alexander, that Soissons was not given up to pillage, and that order was established the moment the storm was over. The sudden disorder, which had been noticed among the enemy, was the consequence of the commandant General Rusca having received a mortal wound: he left no officer behind him fit to take his place and prolong the defence. This circumstance, which naturally contributed to the happy issue of the assault, must be attributed to the extraordinary good fortune which accompanied Chernisheff in all his military enterprizes, and of which he well knew how to avail himself. Fortune had favoured him to such a degree, that most of the generals who fought against him, were wounded or made prisoners: at Lunébourg, Morand died of his wounds; at Halberstadt, Auxe was taken prisoner; Castex was wounded at Liege, and at Soissons Rusca was killed.

Thus was crowned with success an enterprize brilliant in itself, and especially important by its influence on the campaign. It gave fresh uneasiness to Napoleon, on the subject of the capital, where they were still celebrating his victories over Blücher, secured the retreat of the two corps of the army of Silesia, and diminished the unfavourable impression produced on the Allies by the recent successes of Napoleon. If stern critics should find fault with the overdaring of an assault in broad day-light with troops inferior in number to those of the garrison, an answer may be easily found. Let them only look back on that epoch of glory when the Russian Generals were so much accustomed to victory, that the possibility of a defeat did

enter as an element into their calculations. Animated and emboldened by the personal and all-powerful presence of Alexander, they never ceased straining every nerve, by fresh exploits to render themselves still more deserving of his approbation. With what sentiments must he not have been inspired whom the Emperor used to call his own scholar ?

After the taking of Soissons, for which service Chernisheff was raised to the rank of Lieutenant-General, Baron Wintzengerode had resolved to march on Château Thierry ; but hardly had he given the necessary orders, when he learned from the prisoners the victories of Napoleon over the Silesian army ; the extent of which he ascertained from the papers of General Rusca. Among these was found a despatch, received but an hour before the assault, containing the details of the affairs at Champaubert, Montmirail, and Vauchamps, and Napoleon's order to send off a detachment to meet the corps of Sacken and York, then in full retreat from Château Thierry. At the same time, General Wintzengerode having received instructions from Blücher to march to Reims, set off immediately for that town. Influenced by this change of circumstances, he did not think it expedient to weaken his forces by leaving a garrison in Soissons, which was now taken possession of by Mortier, who had been sent in pursuit of the Silesian army. He afterwards received orders to halt at Reims, and with his advanced-guard, under the command of Benkendorf, to occupy Epernay, Dormans, and other places on the right bank of the Marne. In this position he was to wait the coming up of the corps of Counts Stróganoff and Worontzoff, who had reached

France from the north of Germany, and were now on the left bank of the Rhine. In the meantime, Sacken and York rejoined Blücher, who had waited for them at Chalons, where he was indefatigably active in re-establishing order in his army.

In terminating our notice of these events, we have to add, that, at this time, the war in France began to assume a national character. After the defeats of the Silesian armies, bands of soldiers kept roving about in all directions. To these may be added, the numerous followers of the different corps, such as drivers, suttlers, and the lingerers, who, as usual, hung about the baggage; that branch of the service, which, down to the present day, has, in no European army, been put on a footing of good order. These insolent bands wandered about in the woods, and among the villages; and being no longer restrained by the fear of punishment, gave a loose to the impulse of their passions. On this head, however, there was much exaggeration in the French newspapers, in which every effort was made to make the rising of the people general. On the one hand, inflamed by proclamations, and on the other, by the possibility of overpowering these marauders, the inhabitants took up arms, and with more or less fury, continued their reprisals till the peace was concluded.

CHAPTER VII.

Line of Operations of the Grand Army—Causes of Prince Schwarzenberg's inaction—The Allies cross the Seine—Movements of the Grand Army at the time of Blücher's defeat—Alexander's Instructions to Blücher—Results of Blücher's Defeat—Incursions of the Russian Partisans into the west of France—The Ataman of the Cossacks—Kosciusko.

ACCORDING to the plan of operations laid down at Brienne, the Grand Army was to march on Paris by both banks of the Seine. It reached Troyes on the 25th January, where it was put into cantonments for three days. Only the advanced-guards were pushed forward; Count Witgenstein's being posted between Méry and Nogent, Count Wrédé's on the road to Trenelle, and Count Giulay's and General Bianchi's in the direction of Sens, Villeneuve, and Auxonne. Count Barclay, with the reserves, lay at Méry, and the Emperor Alexander, whose original intention it was to follow with the army, halted at Troyes, where some discussion on the subject of peace took place.

By this disposition of his troops, Prince Schwarzenberg apparently took every measure of precaution used in defensive warfare. He covered, to a great distance, the flanks of the army, and, as if he were dreading an attack from every quarter, scattered his forces in all directions. Dispositions, so far inferior to his talents, were not the results of his conviction of their expediency, but were made in order to give the Austrian cabinet time to take measures for realizing its

intention of making peace. On this subject, Prince Schwarzenberg had been furnished with a secret order from his court, not to cross to the right bank of the Seine. I am not the only person who learned from the lips of the Emperor Alexander a circumstance which explains the Prince's conduct at this period of the campaign. His Majesty ascertained this fact from Schwarzenberg himself at the Congress of Vienna. Such was the real cause of the inaction of the Grand Army after the occupation of Troyes ; and why, in pursuit of the enemy, after the victory of Brienne, it took up ten days in marching from the field of battle to Nogent, a distance of only a hundred versts.

From ignorance of the true cause which we have now stated, Prince Schwarzenberg's conduct has been the subject of much mistaken criticism. Some have ascribed his tardy advance, and the dissemination of his troops, to his narrow capacity ; and others to the fear by which Napoleon, as they would make us believe, had paralyzed the Allies. Even during the war itself, while we were at Troyes, the dispositions of Prince Schwarzenberg appeared incomprehensible, because nobody suspected their true motives. We then had no idea that the Commander-in-chief was striving to conceal his real purpose by decent pretences ; such, for instance, as preserving the troops from the effects of rainy weather, by abstaining from forced marches, guarding against a deficiency in the supplies, or the necessity of taking every precaution against a sudden attack by Napoleon. He was no longer allowed to think of attacking Napoleon, having been expressly ordered not to commit to the chances of war, the fruits of the successes already gained, and was told that the

time for signing a peace was now come. He was bound, unconditionally, to obey; to keep his movements in accordance with the order he had received, and to make strategical calculations subservient to the combinations of diplomacy: these last, however, were speedily destroyed by Napoleon.

The victory of Brienne had been gained on the 20th January, and on the 28th, the Grand Army was still in cantonments between Troyes, Villeneuve, and Méry. On that day, Prince Schwarzenberg received a report from Count Pahlen, that Colonel Vlassof, of the Cossacks, who had been sent to Villenauxe, had discovered Napoleon's movement from Nogent to Sézanne; but this most important intelligence did not induce the Commander-in-chief to take any measures whatever. His position had, doubtless, become a very painful one. On the one hand, he could not act in opposition to the strict orders which had been given him; and on the other, Alexander was continually sending Prince Volkonsky to him to endeavour to rouse him from a state of inaction; the evil effects of which the Field Marshal certainly saw as well as others. He well knew that he was not only letting slip an opportunity for gaining glory, but he was making himself an object of reproach. At length, on the 29th January, being no longer able to resist the pressing instances of the Emperor, he began gradually to put his army in motion: Counts Witgenstein and Wrédé marched to Nogent and Bray, and the other corps to Sens and Montéreau.

The defence of the Seine at Nogent, Bray, and Montéreau, had been confided by Napoleon, before he set out to attack Blücher, to Marshals Oudinot and

Victor; and that of Sens and the banks of the Yonne to General Alix. On approaching Nogent, Count Pahlen had some warm affairs with the troops posted in advance of that town, under the command of General Bourmont, afterwards well known as the conqueror of Algiers. Prince Schwarzenberg having in person reconnoitred the environs of Nogent, was of opinion, that to take the town by storm would occasion much bloodshed: contenting himself, therefore, with leaving some troops to observe it, he ordered Count Witgenstein to cross the Seine at Pont-sur-Seine, and Count Wrédé to do the same at Bray. The object of this manœuvre was to threaten the communications of the enemy's division at Nogent with the main body, which had already retired to Provins. As soon as the French saw that they were going to be turned, they evacuated the town, having long defended the point assigned to them, and fulfilled the intentions of Napoleon. On reaching Nogent, Prince Schwarzenberg heard a distant cannonade in the direction of Sézanne and Villenauxe. It was that of the affair at Champaubert, to which he paid no attention, saying, that he knew from the credible reports of his spies, that Napoleon must be in Paris, on account of troubles which had broken out in the capital. In the meantime, while Counts Witgenstein and Wrédé were beginning to cross the Seine, the hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg took Sens by assault, and the Austrians marched to Montéreau and Fontainebleau.

This general advance of the Grand Army, and the circumstance of the passages of the Seine being now in the hands of the Allies, induced Marshals Victor and Oudinot to retire from Provins to Nangis, where

they were joined by Marshal Macdonald, who, on Blücher's first descending the Marne, had been driven back to Meaux. As they doubted the possibility of longer making head against the Grand Army, they addressed themselves to Napoleon's brother, Joseph, now the leading personage in Paris, requesting to know his pleasure as to ulterior operations. Their baggage-waggons had already reached Charenton, which may be counted among the suburbs of Paris, and where their arrival alarmed the inhabitants the more, that during the preceding days the government had used every possible means, by circulating exaggerated reports of the affair at Champaubert and Montmirail, to make people believe that all danger had vanished. By order of the police, the printing presses of Paris were kept at work night and day to announce the triumph of Napoleon, and the deliverance of the capital. A council of war resolved that the Marshals should retire to the river Yères, and take up a position near Guignes and Chaumes, which was well adapted to enable a small body of troops to offer a temporary resistance to superior forces. On the 3rd February, the Marshals occupied the appointed position, and there awaited Napoleon's orders. These commanders, who, at no remote periods, had led their legions to the conquest of distant lands, now despaired of saving the capital of France ! But destiny put off, for six weeks longer, the execution of her decree.

Hardly had Counts Witgenstein and Wrédé begun to cross the Seine, when on the 30th January, Major-General Count Witt, arrived at Troyes with a report from Field Marshal Blücher, that Napoleon had turned upon him, routed Olsoofief, and cut off the commu-

nications between the corps of the Silesian army. This report was presented by Prince Volkonsky to the Emperor at the moment His Majesty was engaged in a warm discussion with Lord Castlereagh, on the necessity of prolonging the war, and of acting with increased energy. Blucher's failure was a most eloquent argument in support of the Emperor's views. With an expression of anger and indignation, His Majesty communicated to his Lordship the contents of the report; adding, this was the fruits of insisting for peace, and of the inaction of the Grand Army. It was now determined, in order to threaten the rear of the army which had marched with Napoleon, to hasten the passage of the Seine by the three corps of the Grand Army at Nogent, Bray, and Montereau, and to concentrate them at Provins. The two corps of Austrians were ordered to continue their advance to Fontainebleau, and the reserve of Count Barclay to march from Méry to Nogent. By this disposition, the right wing of the army was posted at Nogent, and the left at Montereau, in readiness, the moment the hourly-expected intelligence of Napoleon's movements should arrive, to move towards the Marne on his rear, or, if he should have retired to Paris, to march thither along the Seine.

Desiring in this important conjuncture to be nearer to the army, the Emperor left Troyes, and took up his residence near Pont-sur-Seine, at a country seat belonging to Napoleon's mother, and where she usually spent the summer. Here His Majesty employed himself in arranging measures for assisting Blücher, and of extricating him from his difficult position. The following order, addressed to the Field Marshal on the

3rd February, will explain them. "From a report this moment received from General Diebitch," writes the Emperor, "we have learned, that yesterday the enemy marched in great force from Montmirail to Etoges, on the great Chalons road. It is thus probable that you, with the corps of Generals Kleist and Kaptsevitch, will have had to sustain the undivided shock of the enemy, and to retire to Chalons. It is also likely that Generals Sacken and York were not only unable to force their way at Montmirail; but, as appears from papers taken from an intercepted courier, were driven beyond the Marne. On these grounds we have taken the following measures for your support, which I hasten to communicate to you.

"1. The corps of Counts Witgenstein and Wrédé shall instantly march on the enemy's communications to La Ferté-sous-Jouarre and Montmirail.

"2. The Grand Army shall take up a position in support of these corps.

"It is considered as most expedient that you should march on Vitry, with Kleist and Kaptsevitch, and order Sacken and York to retire on the corps of Wintzengerode and Bülow, or, if possible, to join you at Reims with all their troops. Circumstances must decide what you are to do. In the former case, if you should march to Vitry, which seems most advisable, you could join the Grand Army on the day of action; and in the latter, you will be able to act on the enemy's communications.

"As I have reason to think that your couriers have been intercepted, it will be better to send them by two roads." Agreeably to this plan, Count Witgenstein marched to Nogent, Count Wrédé to Donne-

Marie, the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg to Montéreau, and the reserves, by the Emperor's orders, were posted between Nogent and Pont-sur-Seine. Hardly were these movements completed, when news was brought from Blücher of his having been attacked by the French at Vauchamps, and of his retreat by the road to Chalons. In these circumstances, Prince Schwarzenberg, being ignorant of Napoleon's designs in that quarter, and being under apprehension for the safety of the rear and the right wing of the army, thought fit to move by that flank on Arcis-sur-Aube. In order to conceal this movement, and to retard the march of Napoleon's forces, which were supposed to be following Blücher, Counts Witgenstein and Wrédé were ordered to march on Sézanne, and to act on the offensive in the enemy's rear ; the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg received orders to retire from Montéreau on Nogent, Méry, and Arcis; Giulay's corps on Troyes, and Bianchi to return from Fontainebleau to Sens.

These dispositions, however, were made in vain. Hardly had the orders been despatched, when, in the night of the 3rd February, the Prussian General, Hack, arrived from Blücher with the intelligence, that, after the affairs at Etoges, Napoleon had given up the pursuit of the Silesian army, and had returned to Montmirail. On the very instant the Emperor, accompanied by Prince Volkonsky, set off with the news to Prince Schwarzenberg at Nogent, waked the Field Marshal, who little expected such a visit, sat down on his bed, and concerted with him the measures which were now to be taken. It was resolved, as a consequence of the change of circumstances, to stop the

movements of the Grand Army on Sézanne, Arcis, and Troyes, and to order the corps not to stir from their positions till certain information were received of the enemy's movements, and till Blücher should have reported at what time he counted on getting his troops together, in order to act simultaneously with the Grand Army. These arrangements being made, the Emperor, on the morning of the 4th February, crossed over to Bray, from whence he wrote to Blücher as follows :

“ It is my desire that you should march, with all possible speed to join us, through Sézanne. With regard to the corps of Sacken and York, you will order them to cross to the left bank of the Marne, to reach the Chalons road at Etoges or Vertus, and to keep in close connexion with you. With this view, it will be the best plan to cross the river, either at Chalons or Epernay. You will immediately let me know when these corps have crossed the Marne, and have reached Etoges or Vertus. If General Wintzengerode has effected his junction with Sacken and York, they will all cross the Marne together, and Bülow alone will continue his operations on the right bank of that river. On the contrary, if Bülow is still far behind, Wintzengerode must remain on the right bank until he comes up ; after which, he will join Sacken and York.

“ If Bulow has already reached the Marne, then Wintzengerode, Sacken, and York will cross the river together ; and observing the inviolable rule of keeping their troops in one body, use all diligence to effect their junction with you.”

The defeats sustained by Blücher produced most unpleasant effects on the minds of our Allies ; for the

triumphs of 1813 could not efface from their memory the long series of Napoleon's victories in former years. And doubtless, at the time, the blows inflicted on the Silesian army were naturally felt as severe ; but now, on reviewing them, with reference to the general march of events, we shall see that their consequences were beneficial. We have seen that at the moment Napoleon was ruining Blücher, Alexander had to encounter almost equal difficulties in diplomatic discussions, and in his efforts to bring the Allies to the resolution of not concluding a peace. They were not convinced by his arguments ; but after Blücher's defeat, having good reason to think that Napoleon would not agree to the conditions offered him at Châtillon, they were obliged to give at least a temporary assent to the Emperor's opinion on the necessity of prolonging hostilities. Hence, it follows, that the affairs at Champaubert, Montmirail, and Vauchamps, on the one hand, ruined the hopes of those who wished, and urgently pressed for peace ; and on the other, that the success which, for some days, crowned the arms of Napoleon, brought him nearer to his final destruction. He might, probably, have escaped it, if his enterprises against Blücher had been less successful ; for, in that case, he would no longer have persisted in rejecting the proposals of the Allies, but would have made up his mind to make the sacrifices demanded of him, and thus have kept possession of his throne. A momentary triumph filled him with the hope of crushing his opponents, and incited him to continue the war ; in other words, to do the very thing which the Emperor wished him to do.

Although the fate of the campaign was to be decided

where Alexander and Napoleon were personally present, we shall leave these rivals for a while, with the Seine between them, and turn to the operations of Platof and SCSLÁVIN. Their operations had no influence on the result of the campaign; but it will not be uninteresting to follow the Russians in Western France, where our countrymen had never penetrated. A slight sketch of their incursions will help to relieve the mind of the reader from the contemplation of the bloody scenes we have been describing, and to which we must shortly return.

From the beginning of the campaign, Platof's detachment marched a-head of the General Army, but rather to the right, in order to keep up the communications with Field Marshal Blücher. When the concentration of the armies had been accomplished, and the battle of Brienne gained, it was no longer considered necessary that Count Platof should remain on the right wing, and it was therefore resolved that he should advance to Nemours, Fontainbleau, and Melun, with three thousand Cossacks, and a troop of the Artillery of the Don. This was the last occasion on which the renowned Ataman, who had enjoyed greater influence over his men than any of his predecessors, appeared on the theatre of war. It would here be out of place to examine how far he personally contributed to the success of his countrymen of the Don, but we cannot allow ourselves to forget, that during the time he commanded them, they secured to themselves an ample space in the page of history. While the Russian standard was borne from Moscow through all Europe, the Cossacks were ever at the head of the army. They were the first to enter the ruined Kremlin;—at

in which there were no fortified places, and consequently Königsberg to announce the independence of the Prussians, and to proclaim it in Berlin under the windows of the royal palace, while their comrades, amidst the acclamations of the Saxons were the first to enter Dresden. In Hamburg, in Cassel, in Bremen, in Leipzig, on the banks of the Rhine, in Rotterdam, in the capital of Charles the Great, the children of the Don were the first to witness the tears of joy shed by the inhabitants in the enthusiasm of gratitude for their deliverance from an iron yoke, and to see the French eagles trodden under foot at their approach. It may be regarded as a calculation nearly approaching to the truth, that during these memorable years the Cossacks captured upwards of three hundred pieces of cannon, and a hundred thousand prisoners; but their proudest boast was ever to have been the first to hear the blessings which the nations poured on the mighty name of Alexander!

Towards the end of January, Platof crossed the Yonne, and advancing to Aigrevilliers, sent out parties in every direction. Their appearance completely thwarted the measures of the French government in these districts, by rendering it impossible to draw any supplies from them. This was the real object of the detachment, and in order the more completely to accomplish it, Count Platof resolved to gain possession of Nemours. Napoleon considered this town to be of great importance to the security of the whole country round it, and had lately sent thither, as commandant, an old staff officer of his guard. The fall of Nemours would necessarily place in the hands of the Allies the whole country between the Yonne and the Ouanne,

quently nothing to embarrass the operations of light troops.

On the 3d February Platof approached Nemours, demanded its surrender, and having received a refusal, went up to the assault. The Cossacks lost no time in making themselves masters of the suburbs, and their artillery fired with such effect, that most of the enemy's cannoneers were killed or wounded; but still the Commandant persisted in defending the town. As soon as it was dark, the Cossacks renewed the attack, broke down the city gates, and rushed into the streets pike in hand. The French then proposed to capitulate, on condition of the garrison being allowed to retire to Fontainebleau. This condition, however, was rejected, and as part of the town was already in the hands of the Russians, the Commandant, with the whole garrison, amounting to six hundred men and seventeen officers, were made prisoners of war along with four pieces of cannon. On taking Nemours, the Ataman sent his report to the Emperor, which we shall here give entire, for this reason, that its style, which is no longer used in such documents, and is indeed unknown to the present generation, recalls the reign of the Empress Catherine, and bears on it the impress of the age of that great woman:—

“ MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN !

“ I TAKE the liberty of offering my most humble congratulations on the victory at Nemours, gained by a detachment of the faithful troops of Your Imperial Majesty. May the victorious standard of a Most Gracious Monarch be soon unfurled with new glory on the walls of a proud capital, for the subjection of the

enemies of the world in the name of my most Serene Sovereign and Father !”

It is a curious fact that the weakest point of Nemours, that at which the attack was made, was pointed out by one of the most inveterate enemies of Russia, Kostéwshko,* well known for the part he took in the Polish insurrection, in the year 1794. Taken prisoner by Count Fersen, and afterwards loaded with favours by the Emperor Paul, he went to France, where he settled on the banks of the Ouanne. One of our patrols having reached the neighbourhood of the estate on which he resided, the following letter was handed to the officer who commanded it :—“ I am a Pole, and my name is Kostéwshko ; I once had the honour of commanding the armies of my country. I afterwards retired from the world to the village of Berville belonging to my friend Mr. Zeltner, formerly Swiss minister at Paris. We have lived for fifteen years together, unknown by any body. I have now to request you will do us the favour to place a few Russian soldiers on our estate, in order to protect us from the stragglers and lingerers. If you have not authority to grant my request, have the goodness to forward my letter to the Commander-in-chief.” Kostéwshko’s desire was gratified. He had Russians billeted on him, and was politely treated. At this very time Count Platof was planning the assault of Nemours, and Captain Bergman of the Guards, who was then attached to him, having introduced the subject in the course of conversation with Kostéwshko, who was quite familiar with the localities, the latter sketched a

* Usually written *Kosciusko*.

plan of the town, and pointed out to him the proper point of attack.

After the taking of Nemours, Count Platof sent parties to watch the enemy's troops which were coming up to Paris from Orleans, and then marched in person to Fontainebleau in order to liberate the Pope who was there kept in captivity. In this attempt, however, he did not succeed, for His Holiness had been removed from Fontainebleau two days before the arrival of the Cossacks. Our detachment passed twenty-four hours in this summer palace of the French monarchs, but was obliged to retire on the appearance of a considerable body of the enemy.

At the same time with Count Platof, Major-General Soslávin was sent from the left wing of the Grand Army to act on the enemy's line of communications between Orleans and Paris, and to get intelligence of the troops which were on their march from the Spanish frontier to join Napoleon. On the 29th January he reached the Ouanne near Montargis. As he was about to cross this river he was met by a small body of French troops, who had been joined by the peasants of the neighbourhood. They tried to prevent him from throwing a bridge, but were driven off. The Cossacks having crossed the river by swimming, pursued them beyond Montargis and then entered the town. "The inhabitants," according to Soslávin's report, "spoke with enthusiasm of the Emperor Alexander, calling him their deliverer." From Montargis the detachment advanced through Pithiviers towards Orleans, and, after several successful skirmishes with different French parties, came within

twenty versts of the latter town. Soslavin gave orders to ruin the navigation of the Orleans canal, which unites the Loire and the Seine, and serves to transport supplies from the southern provinces to Paris. He likewise caused the vessels in it to be burned, the locks to be destroyed, and the water let off. But the Emperor, on receiving the report of what had been done, ordered the canal to be repaired, and availed himself of this occasion to repeat his express orders that the troops should endeavour to do the least possible injury to the inhabitants; the object of the war being to free them from the yoke of oppression.

This circumstance recalls to our memory a trait of the Emperor's boyhood. When the Empress Catherine asked him what had given him most pleasure in the history he was reading, he answered: "the behaviour of Henry IV., who, during the siege of Paris, sent provisions to the inhabitants." The innocent boy spoke on the impulse of his innate love to suffering humanity, little thinking that an opportunity was reserved for him, not merely of imitating Henry IV., but even of surpassing that monarch in acts of beneficence to the city of Paris.

Our partizans did not penetrate farther into the West of France, having been ordered to return on the general retreat of the Grand Army to Troyes. Had it not been for this order, nothing could have stopped them from going on, nor hindered their junction with the Duke of Wellington, who was then near Bayonne. Even before the passage of the Rhine, Soslavin and Baron Geismar, and afterwards Colonel Bock, requested leave to join the English commander by cross-

ing through France with flying detachments, but did not receive His Majesty's permission. Although this daring attempt was not made, we have thought it right to notice it as a proof of the enterprizing spirit of Russian officers.

CHAPTER VIII.

Position of the Allied Armies—Count Witgenstein leaves Provins—Napoleon attacks the Grand Army—Count Pahlen Retreats—Affair at Mormant—Russians sustain much loss at Bray—Colonel Leblé taken prisoner—Justification of the conduct of General Witgenstein—Retreat to Troyes—Junction with Blücher—Murat declares War against Napoleon—Napoleon desires peace with Austria—Suspension of hostilities proposed—Retreat to Bar-sur-Aube—Council of War.

NAPOLEON by beating the army of Silesia, and forcing it back on Chalons, averted the danger which had threatened Paris, but did not pursue Blücher beyond Etoges. Leaving Marshals Mortier and Marmont to act against him, he himself, with the guard and the rest of the troops, returned from Champaubert through Montmirail to Meaux, from whence he purposed commencing offensive operations against the Grand Army. He had already sent word to Marshals Macdonald, Victor, and Oudinot that he was coming up to their aid, and that he would speedily reach the ground on which they were posted at Guignes. On the 4th February the whole army assembled by forced marches at this point. On the same day Napoleon was joined by a considerable body of horse and foot which had arrived from Spain, and the order was given for the whole army to move forward on the following morning. And thus for the third time in this campaign, Napoleon prepared to act on the offensive, and for the third time met the Russians in the front line of his opponents.

At this time the three corps of the Grand Army

were on the right bank of the Seine : the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg lay at Montereau, Count Wrédé at Donne-Marie and Bray, and Count Witgenstein, who, though by the tenor of his instructions he should have halted at Provins, yet disregarding the order of Prince Schwarzenberg, had marched to Nangis, and sent forward his advanced guard to Mormant under the command of Count Pahlen. In the night of the 4th, the enemy wishing to ascertain whether the Russians had retreated from Mormant, approached our line, but being met with discharges of grape, returned to their camp. From the patrols and French deserters, Count Pahlen learned the arrival of Napoleon at Guignes, and of his intention to attack. He instantly reported this to the commander of the corps, but received no answer. On reading the report of the general of his advanced-guard, Count Witgenstein thought he had exaggerated the danger.

Count Pahlen was now in a most difficult situation. On the one hand he was convinced that Napoleon might be hourly expected to fall upon him with his whole forces, while on the other, he had no possibility of avoiding the blow ; for he had orders to remain at Mormant, and had received no answer to a second report which he had sent to the commander of the corps. Without orders he could not retreat, as by retiring, he would have drawn down the enemy on the troops of Count Witgenstein then at Nangis, and have exposed them to a defeat. In this extremity he resolved to pass the whole night under arms, and to wait the event.

In the meantime Prince Schwarzenberg wrote to Count Witgenstein that he disapproved of his movement on Nangis and Mormant. He farther told him

that when he had ordered his corps and that of Count Wrédé to the right bank of the Seine, it was not with the intention that they should advance on Paris, but that they should take up a position at Donne-Marie and Provins, and stand on Napoleon's flank when he should attack Blücher, and thus, according to the Field Marshal's idea, divide the enemy's attention and impede the concentration of his troops. The Commander-in-Chief complained to the Emperor that Count Witgenstein was acting arbitrarily and contrary to his instructions, in proof of which he presented the Count's report in the original. The result was, that Prince Volkonsky on the 4th February, signified His Majesty's commands to the Count in the following terms: "The Emperor has seen with the greatest astonishment, by your report to the Field Marshal, that you have left Provins with your whole corps, and have advanced to Nangis, thus laying our right flank completely open. This movement is contrary to the ideas of Prince Schwarzenberg, for the enemy in considerable force still occupies Montmirail and La Ferté sous Jouarre, and by taking the direction of Provins, may easily interrupt our communications. His Majesty commands me to inform you, that in the present circumstances, the enemy being now at a very short distance from us, you are not, without a special order, to make any movement of importance, as from a want of harmony in the general operations, disastrous consequences may ensue."

On receiving this order Count Witgenstein caused his corps to return from Nangis to Provins, and sent word to Count Pahlen that he should also retire on that town, leaving the light cavalry to watch the enemy

till it should be relieved by the Austrian advanced-guard of Count Wrédé's corps, which was then at Nangis. After seeing his troops in march for Provins, Count Witgenstein rode off to the advanced-guard.

His aide-de-camp, Count Goorief, the present ambassador at Rome, reached the advanced-guard with the order to retreat, when Count Pahlen was already pressed on every side and had abandoned Mormant. To add to his embarrassment, the Count learned from the aide-de-camp, that the corps had left Nangis for Provins; of course he had no longer any hope of receiving a reinforcement till he should reach that town, which was nearly forty versts distant. He had now no other course to pursue but to retire, as he best could, before Napoleon, who at day-break had moved against him from Guignes and Chaulmes, and was now approaching with an overpowering force. On perceiving the advance of the enemy, whom he had been all night expecting, Count Pahlen sent off his artillery by the high road, followed by the infantry regiments of Reval, Selengwinsk, Esthonia, and the 25th light infantry. The flanks were covered by nine weak squadrons of the Tchugooief hulans, and hussars of Olviopol and Soomsk with two regiments of Cossacks: a few guns were left in the rear-guard.

For more than an hour, the retreat was conducted in good order. The infantry kept up their fire, and coolly received that of the enemy's batteries, at the same time repulsing the first attacks of the cavalry. The enemy's charges, however, continued to increase in weight and vigour, and there now came on large bodies of the cavalry which had just arrived from Spain. These veterans, eager to restore its former lustre to

the French arms, and encouraged by Napoleon's recent victories and by the presence of the whole army, furiously charged the infantry and the cavalry, which was retreating by both sides of the road. Our hussars, hulans and Cossacks, being at length completely surrounded, were routed, the centre was broken, and the whole advanced-guard receiving no reinforcement, was put to flight. Even Count Witgenstein and the chief of his staff D'Auvray who were present in the combat, were hurried away in the general rout. The latter was on the point of falling into the enemy's hands, but his aide-de-camps, who were following him, by flogging his horse which was slipping on the ice, enabled him to escape being made a prisoner. It was in vain that Counts Witgenstein and Pahlen sent to beg aid from one of the allied generals who was lying with Count Wrédé's advanced guard between Nangis and Donne-Marie. Returning them for answer, that he had received orders not to fight, he retired to Donne-Marie; but he too was overtaken by the French, and at Bray sustained considerable loss.

The fury of the pursuit slackened beyond Nangis, near Maison-Rouge. Here the French divided; Marshal Victor turning off to Donne-Marie, and Marshal Oudinot going on to Provins, where Count Witgenstein's corps was in position. Our loss on this day amounted to nine guns, and 2,114 killed and missing. The foot regiments of the advanced-guard defended themselves long and obstinately. Colonel Leblé, of the regiment of Selenguinsk, repulsed several charges of cavalry, and continued to fight with desperation, till he was cut down, and taken prisoner. So heavy was the loss* of this regiment, and that of Reval, that for

* 1359 men.

some time they ceased to exist, and were marked in the reports as "sent to Plotsk to be recruited." At the barrier of Paris, as the Emperor was entering the capital, His Majesty seeing Pahlen for the first time after the affair of Nangis said to him : " You think I am angry with you, but I know you were not in fault."

When the news of this defeat reached head-quarters, a division of cuirassiers were sent to reinforce Count Witgenstein, and the grenadier corps was brought to Nogent where the Emperor soon arrived in person. All were unanimous in blaming Count Witgenstein for having, without permission and contrary to the plan laid down, advanced from Provins to Nangis ; for nobody doubted that our disaster had been occasioned by this movement. Yet it may be stated in his justification, that he was bound to watch the enemy before him, and to push forward his advanced-guard to Mormant, when his old acquaintances Oudinot and Victor had retreated to Guignes and Chaulmes from the banks of the Dwina ; for if he had remained at Provins, he must have lost sight of them, especially as he was in a country where no reliance could be placed on the reports of the hostilely disposed inhabitants. But even if he had found spies, what experienced commander would think of acting on their information, and would not desire to ascertain with his own eyes the correctness of their reports ? As Count Witgenstein's right wing was covered by the detachments of General Diebitch at Montmirail and Prince Lubomirsky at La Ferté Gaucher, he thought it his duty to advance to Nangis, in order to be near his advanced-guard, and to reinforce it in case of an attack. He considered this movement as so much the less dangerous, that on

the preceding day he had received intelligence from General Diebitch of Napoleon's march from Montmirail to Coulommiers. It appears to have been this report that led him wrong, for he erroneously concluded from it that Napoleon was certainly retreating on Paris ; forgetting that from Coulommiers the enemy could descend to Guignes, as he actually did. I therefore venture to think that on this occasion, he went wrong in his calculations, acted with too much confidence, and did not pay sufficient attention to the reports of Count Pahlen, who more than once gave him notice of Napoleon's arrival with his whole army to the support of Victor and Oudinot, and shewed him that the advanced-guard was threatened with immediate danger, to avert which no measures whatever were taken.

In order to understand Count Witgenstein's unauthorized advance to Nangis, we must take into the account a moral feature of his character. He was in the Russian army what Blücher was in the Prussian, and like that commander held the French, whom both had often vanquished, in contempt. He fully shared Blücher's dissatisfaction with Prince Schwarzenberg for his dilatoriness, thought that the only way to triumph over Napoleon was by resolution and promptitude, and that there was no time to be lost in getting to Paris, where he was anxious to arrive before his rival in glory, Blücher. These opinions were quite opposed to the conduct which had been prescribed to Prince Schwarzenberg, and drew from him reproaches, of the sincerity of which we may, for the sake of his honour, be permitted to doubt. He certainly was fully convinced that instead of scattering the troops on both banks of the Seine, and sending the Austrian corps to Fontaine-

bleau, his true plan was to concentrate his whole army on the right bank of that river, to fall upon Napoleon in flank and rear, force him back on the Marne, and cut him off from Paris. The unaided corps of Counts Witgenstein and Wrédé, wherever they might have been posted on the right bank, must, sooner or later, on Napoleon's first attack, have been compelled to retreat with more or less loss.

From Provins Count Witgenstein marched to Nogent, and Count Wrédé having on the same day been driven out of Donne-Marie, retreated to Bray. It was equally Napoleon's plan to fall upon the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, who was lying in advance of Montereau; but the corps of Marshal Victor, which had been sent against him, was unable, from over-fatigue, to reach its destination in time, a circumstance which cost the Marshal his command. Thus we have seen that, on the 5th February, Napoleon succeeded in driving back to the Seine a great part of the allied army which was on the right bank. On the following day our corps crossed the river, with the exception of the Prince of Wirtemberg, who was ordered to maintain his position at Montereau, in order to give the rest of the troops time to assemble, and to secure them from being outflanked on the left. The reserves were lying at Trenelle, where the Emperor arrived on the 6th February at five o'clock in the morning. The Austrians, who occupied Fontainebleau, received orders to retire to the right bank of the Yonne, in order to rejoin the army. On this day Napoleon attacked the Prince of Wirtemberg, who manfully defended himself, but was at last, after sustaining a heavy loss, obliged to yield to the superior forces of the enemy.

It is said that Napoleon, under the fire of the Wirtembergers, betook himself to his old profession, pointed a gun, and on being reminded of the danger to which he was exposing himself, answered, "Don't be alarmed: the ball which is to kill me is not yet cast." The saying was a correct one; for it was neither iron nor lead, but the firmness of Alexander, which annihilated him whose existence had been but a bloody mockery of destiny over humanity.

When Napoleon had made himself master of Montereau and the other passages of the Seine, and could thus act on the offensive against the Grand Army, it was resolved not to give battle at Trenelle, but to retreat to Troyes, there to unite all the corps, and then wait for the arrival of Blücher, to whom, as we have seen from the preceding chapter, the Emperor had written on the 4th February, consequently on the eve of Napoleon's attack on the corps of Witgenstein and Wrédé.

And now, as at Brienne, Napoleon's offensive operations served only to hasten the junction of the allied armies. Both times this happened from his not having attacked them in flank or on their line of communication. We have in the proper place explained the reasons why his movement on Brienne was not productive of the advantages he expected. His attack on the Grand Army, on the 5th February, was of equally small advantage to him; for he only pushed back the heads of its columns to a certain distance. It is no doubt true, that in the different affairs at Mormant, Bray, and Montereau, he captured colours and cannon, and made 4,000 prisoners; but these trophies, exaggerated tenfold in the French bulletins, were in them-

selves but of small importance, for the communications with the Silesian army were not only left uninterrupted, but rendered still easier by Napoleon's movement against our left wing. On the contrary, if he had fallen on Prince Schwarzenberg's right wing, and driven it back as far as the Yonne, he might well have looked for the most brilliant results. But in this campaign, which is erroneously held up as a masterly display of Napoleon's military skill, if we except his admirable movement from Sezanne against Blücher, he did not show himself equal to his great reputation.

On the 7th February began the concentration of the various corps of the Grand Army at Troyes, the object of which, conformably to the opinion of the Emperor Alexander, was to resume the offensive in conjunction with the army of Silesia, provided Blücher, whose troops had been scattered by defeats, were able to join in good time. All doubt on that head soon vanished; for an aide-de-camp having been sent to him to ask if he could bring up 30,000 men to Troyes on the 10th or 11th, in order to take part in a general engagement, received this answer, "Say that I shall be at Mery before that time with 50,000 men and 300 pieces of cannon." In fact, during his stay of five days at Chalons, he reorganized his beaten army with incredible expedition, and having reinforced it with the Russian and Prussian troops which had arrived from the Rhine, reached Mery on the banks of the Seine on the 9th February, and closed up to the right wing of the Grand Army. On leaving Chalons he had sent the following report to the Emperor Alexander:—"General Vlodok has handed me the order of your Imperial Majesty. I have already put my army in motion in

conformity to the enclosed disposition, and I count myself happy in having been able to comply with your order. On the 8th February I shall reach Sezanne with 51,000 men, and shall then wait for further orders from your Majesty. General Wintzengerode remains on the Paris road. I present a report of the reinforcements now on their way to join him."

With respect to the corps of General Wintzengerode which the Field Marshal notices in his report, it remained on the right bank of the Marne at Reims, in hourly expectation of being joined by the troops of Counts Stróganof and Worontzoff. What were the Emperor's intentions with reference to this corps, may be seen from the following Imperial rescript transmitted to General Wintzengerode, two days before the arrival of the Silesian army at Mery: "We shall be joined, in a short time by Blücher, who is on his march through Arcis and Mery, and then we shall attack the enemy with a superiority of force, which must oblige him to retreat. It is therefore my wish that you should, along with the corps of Counts Worontzoff and Stróganof, who are now following you, advance with all speed on Paris, either by the Soissons or the Meaux road, as you may think best. I suppose the Duke of Weimar and General Bülow are at no great distance from you. If they can join you, you will act in concert; if not, they must reinforce you according to circumstances. If the Crown Prince of Sweden should have arrived, you will show him this order, and be guided in executing it by whatever commands he may give you."

Napoleon was a simple spectator of the junction of the Grand and Silesian armies. As if fatigued by the

weight of his exploits between the Seine and the Marne, he pursued the Grand Army with little vigour, and scattered his advanced-guards in different directions, thus putting it out of their power to act with success. He spent several days at Nogent, where he chiefly employed himself in making a new distribution of the troops, and in revising certain plans of operations which he had traced in the beginning of the campaign for the army of Marshal Augereau then at Lyons, and opposed to General Bubna, who afterwards retreated to Geneva. Napoleon thought the time was now come for that army to decide the fate of the campaign, by acting on the communications of the Allies. With this view he ordered Marshal Augereau to move up the Saone, to drive the Austrian detachments out of that district, and penetrating into the mountainous country of the Vosges, to act on our rear by falling upon the baggage, hospitals and detached parties, and by arming the inhabitants in mass, to threaten the line of retreat of the Allies.

While despatching these orders to Lyons, Napoleon reckoned that his army in that quarter would be speedily reinforced by troops, which by previous arrangements were to arrive from Italy; for as yet he did not know that in that country very unpleasant changes had taken place. Murat, the King of Naples, who till then had been his only ally, had declared war against him, and concluded with Austria a treaty offensive and defensive, by which he bound himself conjointly with the troops of that power to act against the French army then in Lombardy. This circumstance put it altogether out of the power of the Viceroy of Italy, who commanded the French troops in that coun-

try, to detach any part of his army to the assistance of Marshal Augereau ; and thus all Napoleon's combinations, so far as connected with this army, necessarily fell to the ground. Besides, Augereau, in whom as his old partner in the victories of Areoli and Castiglione, Napoleon placed peculiar confidence, did nothing to justify it, his operations in this campaign having been slow and unskilful.

Never doubting that his orders would be executed in the South, Napoleon already indulged the hope of a favourable termination of the war. From Nogent he wrote a letter to the Emperor of Austria in which he offered instantly to make peace on the conditions proposed by the Allies at Frankfort, that is, that the Rhine, the Alps and the Pyrenees should be the boundaries of France. He said he would on no account whatever restore Belgium and Antwerp, nor agree to the cessions demanded at Châtillon which he called frightful (*affreuses*.) He assured the Emperor that his army was much stronger than the Allies imagined. To prove this, he requested that Prince Schwarzenberg, Count Bubna or Prince Metternich might be sent to inspect his troops, affirming that he had still the means of fighting several battles before the Allies could enter Paris. "Even if Paris should fall," said he, "France will never endure the yoke laid upon her by England : despair will quadruple the force of the nation."

In this letter, which was dictated by himself, and the style of which bears no resemblance to that of diplomatic communications between crowned heads, we evidently see his anxious desire to break up the alliance by concluding a separate treaty with Austria. According to Napoleon's words, the interest of the cabinet

of Vienna and the re-establishment of the balance of power were inseparably linked with the terms of peace proposed at Frankfort, and with the condition of France remaining a powerful maritime state. While exhausting every expression of respect for the Emperor Francis, he spoke of Russia and England in the language of irreconcilable hatred. He several times alluded to the Emperor Alexander in terms of bitter animosity, and accused him of acting against him from motives of personal malignity. "Alexander's revenge," said he, "is groundless. Before entering Moscow I offered him peace ; and in Moscow, I used every exertion to extinguish the fire which had been kindled by his orders."

The Emperor Francis, at the end of six days, answered Napoleon that the Allies, inflexible in their resolutions, were ready to put an end to the war ; but that a peace based on the balance of power must be a general one in the widest sense ; and that it depended on Napoleon to put an end to the calamities of Europe, by agreeing to the conditions of Châtillon. Firm to his friendship with Alexander, he repelled the accusation which Napoleon had directed against His Majesty. "The noble sentiments," he writes, "of the Emperor of Russia are well known to Your Majesty, and you must be conscious that no thought of revenge could influence his actions."

Before receiving an answer so contrary to his wishes and perhaps to his hopes, the French army had left Troyes. The order of march was in three columns, of which the right took the direction of Sens, the centre that of Pavillon, and the left that of Romilly. The last received an order to take possession on the march

of the town and bridge of Mery, which Napoleon could not leave in the hands of the Allies with safety to his rear. It was likewise his intention to establish his head-quarters in Mery. But that little town was already occupied by a corps of the Silesian army under the command of Prince Stcherbátov, who had orders to destroy the bridge and to defend the passage, and that part of Mery which lies on the right bank of the Seine. His advanced line being on the left bank at the moment the French attacked it, a fire broke out in the town, and quickly enveloped the whole buildings in flames. The skirmishers being ordered to cross the river, the French attempted to follow them along the beams of the broken and burning bridge, but were immediately driven back. On the following day they renewed their attempt to establish themselves on the right bank, but with as little success as before. The obstinate defence of Mery attracted the notice of Napoleon. He gave orders to find out by what troops the post was occupied, and could hardly believe, when it was reported to him, that they were the Russians of the army of Blücher whom he had all along supposed to be at Chalons.

Prince Schwarzenberg being desirous to discover the real amount of Napoleon's troops, twice made a reconnaissance from Troyes, for which operation complicated dispositions were made by his staff. The second of these brought on a somewhat heavy cannonade. The Emperor Alexander, on hearing it, rode down the Seine to the village of Les Grez ; but the firing soon ceased, and the enemy, without being molested, took up a position between Pony and Les Grez, in sight of the Grand Army, which lay with its right wing at

Mongué, and the left in the direction of Villacerf. Preparations for battle were made on both sides, but not with an equal desire to engage. Although the Allies were superior to the French in numbers, Napoleon resolved to attack them, and waited impatiently for the concentration of his forces. He counted on gaining a victory, notwithstanding the Silesian army was on his left wing, for he knew it must take twenty-four hours to cross the Seine, in the course of which he thought he should have time enough to dispose of the Grand Army, in whose rear were the populous town of Troyes, the Seine, and the defiles beyond it; obstacles which in the event of the loss of a battle, must make the retreat somewhat difficult. Besides, Napoleon had no time to lose in taking advantage of the moral influence of the successes he had obtained during the two preceding weeks. These successes had emboldened his troops and inspired them with their former self-confidence, while they produced an opposite effect on the greater part of the Allies, a circumstance which could not be unknown to Napoleon. He had even seen many of the German troops of the allied army marching from Trenelle to Troyes in a state of a complete dispersion and disorder as if they had sustained a defeat which left them no hope of safety. This discouragement affected even their commanders, who were still farther alarmed by unfavourable news from the theatre of war in the south. Under these circumstances, Prince Schwarzenberg on the 11th February, suddenly gave an order to retreat from Troyes, and to cross over to the right bank of the Seine. The motives which led the commander-in-chief to resolve on a retreat, will be found in the fol-

lowing short extract, which forms the beginning of one of the daily reports in which he informed the allied monarchs of the occurrences of the preceding day and of his intended operations: "It would appear that the enemy is resolved to attack us. I do not intend fighting with defiles in my rear, and I shall therefore to-morrow take up a position behind Troyes."

It did not escape the penetration of the commander-in-chief that this reason was unsatisfactory, and that his retreat must increase the general discontent which had begun to be expressed against him; for his conduct during the preceding fortnight had lost him the confidence and respect of the troops. He was openly blamed for not pursuing the French after the battle of Brienne, for not marching to Blücher's aid, for sacrificing the corps which lay unconnected on the right bank of the Seine, and afterwards, for causing his army to retreat as if he had sustained a defeat, without engaging an enemy inferior to him in force. This general feeling of dissatisfaction at length became so strong, that on reaching Vandœuvres, the Prince found himself under the necessity of writing a secret order to the commanders of corps, in which he enlarged on the necessity of retreat, and desired them to exert themselves to influence the general opinion, by leading those under their command to regard the measure in that light.

The retreat continued during the whole night of the 11th. Napoleon did not press hard upon us, and confined himself to an insignificant affair with the rear-guard. On the following day, the allied Sovereigns, who had remained at Troyes, went to the King of Prussia, and held a council, at which several generals

and ministers were present. In giving their opinions on the state of affairs, some of the Allies endeavoured to paint it in the blackest possible colours. "The Grand Army," said they, "has lost the half of its numbers by the sword, disease, and wet weather. The country we are now in is ruined; the sources of our supplies are dried up, and all around us the inhabitants are ready to raise the standard of insurrection. The loss of a battle, in such circumstances, would draw after it a retreat to the Rhine, where, in all probability, we should be met by the army of Marshal Augereau, whose troops are now organized and have been joined by reinforcements from the Spanish frontier. He has 40,000 men under arms, whom he has already put in motion. One-half of his army has occupied Chambery and forced Count Bubna to retire to Geneva, and with the other half he is marching to Mâcon on his way to Franche Comté to act in the rear of the Grand Army. In all events," continued the advocates for peace, "we should first secure a way to retreat by, wait for the arrival of reinforcements from Germany, and arrest the progress of the French in the south." As the majority of voices in the council was on the side of those who were against resuming the offensive, as had been proposed by Alexander at Trenelle, it was considered the best policy they could adopt, to offer Napoleon an armistice; and for this purpose one of Prince Schwarzenberg's aide-de-camps was now sent to him.

Napoleon received the aide-de-camp in the hamlet of Châtres almost within view of Blücher, who was then at Mery. As was his custom, he entered into a long conversation with him, and at length asked him "if it

were true that the object of the Allies had changed, and that they now aimed at pulling him from his throne to make way for the Bourbons?" The aide-de-camp, who knew nothing of the intentions of the allied monarchs, could only answer in the negative. Towards evening he was dismissed from the French camp with the following haughty letter from Marshal Berthier to Prince Schwarzenberg. "The assurances given by Your Highness of its being the wish of Austria to bring about a general pacification, have induced the Emperor to accede to your proposal. The commissioners may meet between Troyes and Vaudœuvres to agree about the cessation of hostilities. I request you to inform me of the names of the commissioners, and of the place and hour at which they are to assemble to-morrow."

The plenipotentiaries appointed to conclude the armistice, were General Count Shuváloff for Russia, Duca for Austria, and Rauch for Prussia; Lusigny was the place fixed on for the conference.

Count Shuváloff was furnished with the following order, signed by the Emperor at Vaudœuvres, on the 12th February:—"Having consented to an armistice between the Allied Powers, and the French Emperor, I have made choice of you to conclude it. You will therefore set off for Lusigny where you will receive full powers and instructions from Prince Schwarzenberg. The principal condition is, that the issues of the Vosges shall remain in our hands. If the river Aube cannot be the line of demarcation, the next best for the Grand Army is the Marne as far as Chalons, and for the army of Silesia from Chalons along the course of the Vele till it falls into the Aisne, and

then the course of the Aisne till it join the Oise, where the line of demarcation ends. With respect to the army of Italy and the Duke of Wellington you will receive instructions on the first head from Prince Schwarzenberg, and on the second you will receive a separate order to-day."

While the conferences for the armistice were going on, Napoleon, contrary to the wish of the Austrians, did not agree to suspend his operations. This was in perfect accordance with Alexander's opinion, who had early penetrated the intention of the Allies to enter into correspondence with the enemy; and therefore, on the very day of his arrival at Trenelle, that is, on the 8th February, ordered the head of his staff, Prince Volkonsky, to write the following instructions to General Wintzengerode: "If the enemy should inform you of a suspension of hostilities, or even of the conclusion of a peace, it is thy Emperor's will that you pay no attention to such information, and that you continue your advance till you receive a special order from his Majesty."

This was not the first occasion on which the Emperor Alexander showed himself true to those principles which neither good fortune nor bad could shake. After the battle of Brienne, when everything seemed to favour the Allies, they unanimously expressed their desire to make peace, while the Emperor insisted on the necessity of prolonging the war: and now when the campaign assumed an unfavourable aspect, he retained his opinion unchanged. Of this we are able to give the best evidence, from a conversation at Troyes, between his Majesty and Lord Castlereagh, which was committed to writing, on the day on which it took

place, by General Toll, who overheard it. The British Minister, while passing in review the recent military operations, and the disadvantageous position of the Allies, gave the Emperor to understand how necessary it was to think of peace, before we should be obliged to re-cross the Rhine ; and added, “ I have orders to take advantage of every occasion for making peace, which is now the more necessary that I see the coalition is on the eve of dissolution.” The Emperor with firmness replied : “ My Lord, it will not be a peace, it will be a truce, which will only make you lay aside your arms for the moment. I cannot fly to your aid, having four hundred leagues to march with my armies. I will not make peace so long as Napoleon is on the throne.” But, without saying more of the foreign cabinets, who murmured at the inflexibility of Alexander, we must not forget that, especially about this time, peace had become the favourite subject of conversation in the army, and even among the confidential persons who were with the Emperor ; for the truth of which I may appeal to the testimony of Prince Volkonsky, and of Counts Toll and Nesselrode. That peace was not made, and Europe sacrificed to the ambition of Napoleon, we have to thank the Emperor Alexander alone, who saw farther and clearer into futurity than the foreign diplomatists who accompanied the armies. After Napoleon had been pulled down, and his power annihilated, there were not wanting those, who, on their triumphant return from Paris, attributed to themselves the glory, which they still enjoy, of vanquishing the common enemy, and re-establishing the balance of power. But, without Alexander, that is, if their opinion in favour of putting

an end to the war had prevailed, what would have become of the balance of power, and the present great name of these statesmen? Should we not again have seen them, as in former days, in the anti-chambers of the Tuileries, standing, with all humility, in the presence of him whose will was a law to them? Never was the Emperor Alexander so great as at two epochs of his reign, which will shed a never fading glory over his deathless name, and serve as an instructive lesson to posterity. The first was when he made a vow not to throw away the sword till the enemy were driven out of Russia, and rejected, with disdain, Napoleon's offers from Moscow:—the second, when in France, after the victories of Napoleon, he refused to listen to the general voice, and steadily rejected a peace, demanded by a short-sighted policy, which never reflected that such a peace must prove the source of endless woes to Europe.

In a few hours after the Emperor had left Troyes, the French army came up to the town and demanded its surrender, but received a refusal from the Austrian General, who had been ordered to keep possession of it till the Grand Army should have accomplished the passage of the Seine. The French opened a fire on the town, and mounted to the assault, but were repulsed. Napoleon, who came up to the troops in the evening, did not renew the attack; probably, from a wish to save the inhabitants from the horrors of an assault: he took up his quarters for the night in the suburbs. At daybreak the Austrians evacuated the town, and the French entered it. Immediately on his arrival, Napoleon ordered those of the inhabitants to be shot, who, on the first entrance of the Allies into Troyes, had mounted the white cockade, as a mark of

their attachment to the Bourbons. This measure of severity can hardly be called a prudent one ; and was, in my opinion prejudicial, with reference to the highest political considerations. The punishment of these royalists awakened in France the sleeping memory of her former kings, and of the orders and badges of the old reigning family, thus bringing a new danger, and a new enemy upon Napoleon. From Troyes the French marched partly by Châtillon, and partly by Vaudœuvres in pursuit of the Grand Army, which, on that day, concentrated at Bar-sur-Aube. The Emperor Alexander, too, arrived there, but in no agreeable mood ; for there never had appeared so great a difference of opinion among the Allies on the subject of war and politics, as at this very time. In order to put an end to it, and to adopt decided and unanimous measures, his Majesty was pleased to call a council of war for the following day. This had become the more indispensable that it was necessary to reconcile the diametrically opposite opinions of the two commanders-in-chief, Prince Schwarzenberg and Blücher. The former maintained that the armies must retreat, while the latter insisted that they ought to advance.

In explanation of this circumstance, it is necessary to state that on the retreat from Troyes, Blücher received from the Austrian head quarters a plan of operations, according to which he was to retreat from the Seine, on the right wing of the Grand Army, and along with it. It would be impossible to paint his displeasure at this arrangement. In the first burst of his anger, he spoke openly of bribery and treachery, saying, that he had been invited from Chalons on the false pretext of taking part in a battle at Troyes ; but,

in reality, with the view of doing away the possibility of vanquishing Napoleon. In short, he declared that on no account whatever would he retreat along with Prince Schwarzenberg, but would separate from him, in order to march once more on Paris, and thus compel Napoleon to give up the pursuit of the Grand Army, and again turn his forces against that of Silesia. He instantly sent to inform the Emperor Alexander of his purpose. His Majesty approved of it; but ordered the Field Marshal to be told that he must previously give the details of his plan.

Having received the Emperor's verbal consent to his march on Paris, Blücher presented to his Majesty, on half a sheet of torn paper, the following note, which is the more curious, as being written with his own hand, contrary to his custom. This latter circumstance, of itself insignificant, shows to what a degree his mighty heart was filled with resolution, and that to no one, save the Emperor, would he confide his secret feelings. "Colonel Grolman," he thus writes, "has brought me word, that it is intended that the Grand Army shall make a retrograde movement. I think it my duty to lay before your Imperial Majesty the hurtful consequences which must result from it.

"1. The whole French nation will take up arms; and the French who have declared themselves for the good cause, will suffer.

"2. Our victorious armies will lose heart.

"3. We are retreating into a country where there is no prospect of supplies, and where the inhabitants, being forced to give up their last morsel, will be reduced to despair.

“ 4. The Emperor of the French will recover from the consternation into which he has been thrown by our successes, and will, as before, recover the confidence of the nation. Most heartily do I thank your Majesty for the permission you have given me to resume the offensive. I flatter myself with the hope of success, if your Majesty will give positive orders to Generals Wintzengerode and Bülow to place themselves under my command. Joined by them, I will march on Paris, fearing neither Napoleon nor his Marshals, if they should come to meet me. Your Majesty will allow me to conclude with the assurance that I shall count myself happy, with the army under my command, to execute your orders, and comply with your wishes.”

These are lines which ought to be preserved as a faithful testimony of the firmness and fearlessness of Blücher, who was now burning with the desire of fighting, single-handed, with Napoleon. Here he appears, in the fullest sense, an independent warrior, inspired by the grand idea which gave a new turn to the war. On this occasion we may compare him to the experienced steersman, who, on perceiving a shoal, or sunken rock, by a rapid movement of the helm, gives a new direction to the vessel, and saves her from destruction. But his resolution would have remained but a happy inspiration, a good wish, a mere vision, and no more, if the monarch, who was the soul of the coalition, had not appreciated it, and given it a real existence.

Having paid the due tribute of admiration to the heroic resolution of the warrior, let us turn with grateful remembrance to Alexander. In the midst of hopeless

discouragement, he counted for nothing the temporary triumph of Napoleon, spurned the pusillanimous idea of a general retreat, the end of which no man could see, and allowed Blücher to march on Paris.

On the 13th February, being the day after the Emperor's arrival from Vaudœuvres at Bar-sur-Aube, at eight o'clock in the morning, the Allied Sovereigns assembled at a house occupied by General Knessebeck, who, from illness, was unable to leave his apartment to attend the Council elsewhere. Besides their Majesties, there were present the following persons: Prince Volkonsky, Baron Diebitch, Count Nesselrode, Princes Schwarzenberg and Metternich, Count Radetsky, Lord Castlereagh, and Prince Hardenberg. At this council the following resolutions were adopted:—

“ If the Grand Army should be pursued by the enemy, it shall retreat to Langres, and there, uniting with the Austrian reserves, accept the combat, or begin to act on the offensive.

“ The army of Silesia shall march to the Marne, be there joined by the corps of Generals Wintzengerode, Bülow, and Count Worontzoff, after which it shall advance to Paris.

“ To form an army in the South, and immediately send thither the first Austrian corps, Bianchi's division of the reserve, the Imperial troops in Dijon, and the 6th corps of the German Princes. To place all these corps under the command of the Hereditary Prince of Hesse Hombourg with orders for him to march on Mâcon against Marshal Augereau, to drive him back and clear the line of our communications.

“ The Duke of Weimar to remain for the present in the Netherlands, and the Crown Prince of Sweden

at Liège, in order to keep up the blockade of the fortresses, and to support the army of Silesia if it should be obliged to retreat.

“The Grand Army to act at first on the defensive, while the armies on its flanks, viz. the armies of Silesia and the South, shall begin the offensive with the utmost vigour, and according to circumstances, shall be re-inforced by the Grand Army, or in case of failure, may retreat on it.”

“To continue the negociations at Châtillon, and to instruct the commissioners at Lusigny to sign an armistice only in the event of the enemy yielding up to the Allies the lines of the Rhône and the Saone.”

In the outset of the discussion, opinions were not alike. The majority of those who were present at the Council maintained, that it would be most advantageous for both armies to retreat. This opinion the Emperor Alexander decidedly opposed, saying, that situated as we were, he should not hesitate to separate from the Grand Army with the Russian troops, that is, the guards, the grenadiers, and Count Witgenstein's corps, and along with Blücher march on Paris. “I hope,” he added, turning to the King of Prussia, “that your Majesty too, like a faithful ally, of whose friendship I have had many proofs, will not refuse to accompany me.” The King answered in the affirmative, adding that he had long ago placed his troops at the Emperor's disposal. “But why should you leave me behind you?” said the Emperor Francis. Thus the mutually friendly feelings of the monarchs were the cause of the unanimous measures agreed on at Bar-sur-Aube.

While the Council was engaged in discussion, the

Emperor Alexander took up a pencil, and noted down the substance of the articles relating to the army of Silesia. The original of this note must be among the papers of the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, or in the possession of Prince Metternich, who desired to keep it as a memorial. The following is a faithful translation of it :—

“ 1. Not to give battle at Bar-sur-Aube.

“ 2. Blücher to act separately.

“ 3. The Grand Army to continue its movement through Chaumont and Langres as long as circumstances shall make it necessary.

“ 4. To inform Blücher of this movement of the Grand Army, and that Wintzengerode and Bülow have been ordered to place themselves under his command.

“ 5. To give orders to this effect to Wintzengerode and Blücher.

“ 6. To authorize Blücher to act according to his discretion, on the sole condition of observing certain rules of military prudence : (*pourvu seulement qu'une certaine prudence militaire soit observée.*)” *

When the sitting was over, the Emperor wrote a letter to the Crown Prince of Sweden, and dispatched orders to Field Marshal Blücher, the Duke of Weimar, and Generals Wintzengerode and Bülow, signed with his own hand, and conformable to the resolutions adopted by the Council of War. His Majesty then set out for Chaumont, where he passed a fortnight.

* In the Russian original, the words in italics are in the French language, in which the note was doubtless written by the Emperor.—TR.

CHAPTER IX.

Blücher crosses the Aube—Battle at Bar-sur-Aube—Position of the French and Allied Armies—Defeat of the French—Count Witgenstein wounded—Council of War at Bar-sur-Aube—Treaty of Chaumont—Rupture of the Conference at Lusigny—Advance of the Grand Army.

THE two armies now separated, as they had done after the battle of Brienne; that of Silesia advancing in the direction of the Marne, and the Grand Army retiring towards Langres. Without halting at Vaudoëuvres, the latter crossed to the right bank of the Aube, and drew off by the Chaumont road. It was followed by the two corps of Marshals Oudinot and Macdonald, the former taking the road of Bar-sur-Aube, the latter that of Bar-sur-Seine, and Châtillon. Arcis, Plancy, and Nogent were occupied by the enemy's detachments; Marmont lay at Sezanne, and Mortier between the Marne and the Aisne. Napoleon remained with the Guard at Troyes, where he probably waited to watch the motions of Blücher who was still at Mery.

At ten o'clock in the morning of the day following the retreat from Bar-sur-Aube, the King of Prussia, who was at Colombey-les-églises received intelligence from Marshal Blücher by an express, that he had safely crossed the Aube at Anglure and Baudemont, and that only a part of the French troops was following the Grand Army by Vandœuvres and Bar-sur-Seine, while

the remainder was concentrating at Mery, apparently with the intention of following the army of Silesia. At the same time the commander of the rear-guard of the Grand Army, Count Witgenstein, arrived at Colombey-les-églises. On hearing that the King of Prussia was in the town, he waited on His Majesty, and reported that the rear-guard was hardly followed by any-body, from which he concluded that Napoleon had turned round on Blücher, in whose favour it would be necessary to make a diversion, as otherwise the army of Silesia might be exposed to a defeat. As Prince Schwarzenberg was at Colombey, His Majesty communicated to him the news he had received from Blücher, and likewise repeated what he had heard from Witgenstein. Upon this the Commander-in-chief sent orders for all the corps to halt, with the exception of the reserves, which were already beyond Chaumont and advancing rapidly on Langres, in consequence of information received by Count Barclay who commanded them, that the enemy after occupying Châtillon, appeared to be marching towards Langres.

On this day it was Prince Schwarzenberg's desire to make a general movement in advance, and he had ordered Counts Witgenstein and Wrédé to Bar-sur-Aube, and Count Giulay to La Ferté-sur-Aube; but this could not be accomplished, as the infantry of the two latter was already, agreeably to former orders, beyond Château-Vilain, and could not reach the ground before five o'clock in the afternoon. In the meantime Marshal Oudinot occupied Bar-sur-Aube, and his troops even attempted to advance beyond the town, but they were checked by the batteries of Count

Wrédé. This General having learned, that on the following day the Commander-in-chief intended to make a movement in advance, was desirous of re-taking Bar-sur-Aube which he had evacuated but twenty-four hours before. The Bavarians therefore forced their way into the town, but they were unable to keep it: the suburbs, however, remained in their hands.

At day-break, on the 15th February, Count Witgenstein marched from Colombey-les-églises to Bar-sur-Aube, in front of which was posted the corps of Wrédé. The King of Prussia too, and Prince Schwarzenberg were already on the spot. The Commander-in-chief had not yet come to a resolution as to the mode of attack. His first idea was to place the Bavarians in the first line, with orders to drive the French out of Bar-sur-Aube, and to be supported by Count Witgenstein. The latter, however, on seeing that 40,000 allied troops were crammed into a narrow valley, while certain hills to the right, by which the enemy might turn us, were not occupied, suggested that it would be more advantageous to take possession of these hills, and from thence act on the left wing of the French. Prince Schwarzenberg having communicated this plan to Count Wrédé, the Bavarian General approved of it, adding, however, that his troops, from the exhausted state of both men and horses, were unable to carry it into execution. Hearing this, Count Witgenstein requested leave from Prince Schwarzenberg to set off thither with his corps, and having obtained it, ascended, by ravines and through vineyards, the hill called Malepines, where he found the corps of Oudinot and Gérard so disposed as to cover the bridge over the Aube at Dolancourt. Their

right wing was posted at Bar-sur-Aube, and their left at the wood of Lévigny.

The troops of Count Witgenstein consisted of two corps of infantry; the first, Prince Gortchakof's, and the second, Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg's, and the cavalry of Count Pahlen. He ordered the first corps to fall on the French, in front; and the second to turn them from the right through Lévigny and Arçonval, making for Dolancourt, with the view of cutting off their retreat by that bridge. This was as late as two o'clock in the afternoon; for much time had been spent in consultation, before the troops could ascend the hills. Having, at length, gained the summit, they advanced in the given direction; but when Count Witgenstein, who was in person with the first corps, had got beyond Arentières, he saw that the French were in full advance against him, and that cavalry was crossing to their assistance from the left bank of the Aube. As he had almost no cavalry with him (having sent what he had with Count Pahlen, to make the detour of which we have spoken), he despatched an order for the Count to return, being afraid lest his centre should be pierced, by which the troops sent to Lévigny and Dolancourt might be cut off. Count Pahlen sent back the Aide-de-camp, who had brought him this order, to request the commander of the corps to recal it, as he hoped speedily to reach the passage at Dolancourt, and to stand on the enemy's communications; but, having received a second and peremptory order, he was obliged to obey. In the mean time, the affair became general along the whole line; and Count Witgenstein requested reinforcements from Prince Schwarzenberg, who had remained in the valley

with Count Wrédé. The French, however, soon halted for two reasons : first, because a division of the corps of Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg had issued from the wood of Lévigny, opposite to the extremity of their left wing ; and secondly, because Count Wrédé, at this moment, made an attack on Bar-sur-Aube, which he had delayed, waiting for news of the success of the Russian troops.

The Bavarians and Austrians met with great opposition in the town. The French troops, aided by the inhabitants, occupied the houses, and fired from the windows. At last, however, the turning of the left wing, the attack on the town, and the position of the French, forced Marshal Oudinot to think of a retreat beyond the Aube. By his movements, Count Witgenstein quickly saw that his drift was to gain time till the dusk should enable him to retire in safety. He therefore sent off Count Pahlen (who, in obedience to orders, had returned from Arçonval) again to turn the enemy, and gain the passage of Dolancourt ; but our cavalry, owing to the hilly roads, did not arrive till the enemy had crossed the river. Thus these troops, having been kept marching and countermarching the whole day, took no part in the affair. The infantry, too, was unable to pursue the enemy with vigour, owing to the nature of the ground, and passed the night on the field of battle. Count Pahlen remained in possession of the bridge at Dolancourt, by which the enemy had retreated without losing either colours or guns. Count Witgenstein was wounded, but remained, notwithstanding, with his corps. Count Wrédé on this occasion was promoted to the rank of Field Marshal. The loss of the Russians, in killed and

wounded, amounted to 1,200, and Count Wrédé's to about 300 men.

The King of Prussia remained till the evening with the troops of Count Witgenstein, and decorated with the crosses of his orders several of our commanders of regiments and battalions. The foot regiment of Kaluga especially attracted the notice of His Majesty. The Austrian General, who had been sent at Count Witgenstein's desire to reinforce him, arrived when the affair was over, and, presenting himself to the King, requested his orders. His Majesty answered, that, as the Russians had already beaten the French, and were pursuing them, he would only advise him to support them. This did not prevent the Austrians from publishing, in their relation of the battle, that the General in question, had a share in the victory. Yet it is hardly worth while to notice this trifling circumstance, of which several examples have occurred in the course of our wars beyond the frontiers. Count Witgenstein, by reason of his wound, could not remain any longer with the army. In the course of a few days, the Emperor's permission to retire was received by our celebrated General, who, from the year 1812, had taken so brilliant a part in the war. But another month, and the saviour of St. Petersburg would have witnessed the taking of Paris! His place was taken by Raiéfsky, who commanded the grenadier corps, which was now given to Count Lambert.

Before leaving the army, Count Witgenstein had the satisfaction of receiving the following rescript from the King of Prussia. "In the battle of Bar-sur-Aube, I have again had occasion to witness the bravery of the Russian troops, and of that ability in commanding

them, which does you, my dear General, so much honour. The contents of your letter were the more unexpected by me, as I share in the Emperor's opinion of your merits, and of the excellent conduct of the troops who were under your command in this engagement ; and am able to give you this tranquillizing assurance, that His Majesty is as fully sensible of them as I am."

The combat at Bar-sur-Aube, for which we were indebted to the pressing instances of the King of Prussia, and the dispositions of Count Witgenstein, was important, not so much from the loss which it caused to the enemy, but because it saved, as it were, the honour of the Grand Army ; which, from the day of the battle of Brienne, had been in a state of complete inaction, and put a stop to the retreat on Langres, and, perhaps, to the Rhine. But even after this success, Prince Schwarzenberg did not bring the corps over the Aube, but posted them on the right bank, and sent the advanced-guard alone after Marshal Oudinot. He pursued the enemy very tardily, for reasons explained in the following letter, written by his order on the day after the battle, to Prince Volkonsky, by Count Radetsky, the head of his staff : " Information received from some of yesterday's prisoners, and especially from Major General Seslávin, that Napoleon is marching in the direction of Dijon, has prevented the commander-in-chief from pursuing the enemy with that rapidity, with which we should have followed him, had he been firmly persuaded that Napoleon had marched after Blücher. Add to this, that as the troops are exceedingly fatigued, it would be dangerous, before we procure certain intelligence of the enemy's motions,

to make them advance into a district where no supplies can be procured; for, if the news of Napoleon's march on Dijon should be confirmed, we should be obliged to make a countermarch. For these reasons, the Field Marshal has sent the cavalry, reinforced by some detachments of infantry, after the French. To-day, the Prince of Wirtemberg attacks Bar-sur-Seine, and from the result of this affair we shall gain information of the enemy's movements. In the meantime, the guards and the reserves will remain at Chaumont and Langres, from whence they will be able to reinforce the army in either of two cases, that is, whether it shall advance, or take the direction of Dijon."

From Prince Schwarzenberg's letter, we see that he had not taken advantage of the victory, for two reasons: first, because he attached credit to the report of Napoleon's movement on Dijon; and, secondly, from an anticipated deficiency in the supplies, and the lassitude of the troops. That partizans and prisoners should mistake, is not wonderful; this occurs every day in time of war; but it is strange, indeed, that the commander-in-chief should have been led by them to believe it possible that Napoleon would resolve on an enterprise which must have led him away from Paris, and have thrown the capital, and the greater part of France, into the hands of the Allies. If he had really been on his way to Dijon, Blücher, by keeping close up to him, must, in a short time, have joined the Grand Army, and then the allied forces, being almost double the number of the enemy, would have driven him towards Lyons, and cut him off from Paris, which, being without defence, would have been obliged to surrender to our troops, who were on the right bank of the Marne,

and who would have lost no time in advancing to the capital. The Prince's second reason is certainly a very important element in military calculations; but it should not be an obstacle, any more than fatigue, to a vigorous pursuit of a beaten enemy: victors know neither lassitude nor hunger.

On the day of the battle at Bar-sur-Aube, the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and Count Giulay had been ordered to attack La Ferté-sur-Aube, and from thence to march to Bar-sur-Seine. On the 16th February they had a warm affair on the banks of the Aube, which they crossed, and after some opposition occupied Bar-sur-Seine. Their movements were such as we generally see when two commanders of corps are acting together, independently of each other. The Austrians and Wirtembergers, on the pretext of bad roads and fatigue, lagged and loitered on the march.

In general, about this time, the whole operations of the Grand Army bear an impress of irresolution, which is to be explained by the conflicting opinions of the Cabinets; and this discordance was reflected in the arrangements of the Commander-in-chief. The measures decided upon in the council of war, at Bar-sur-Aube, outwardly reconciled the opinions of the Allied Cabinets; but, in point of fact, did not satisfy their mutual demands and secret wishes. The Austrians found the retreat from Troyes to Langres indispensable, and wanted to stand on the defensive, till they should see how Blücher's enterprise on the Marne would terminate; while the Emperor Alexander maintained that it would be better to march, without delay, on Napoleon's rear. The Austrians had their eyes continually turned to the army of the south at Lyons,

which was destined to secure not only our communications with Switzerland and Germany, but what was to them more important, and, to a certain degree, their object in the war, to aid in the conquest of Italy ; while Alexander insisted that their true object was the overthrow of Napoleon, and that no attention should be paid to accessaries till that should be realized. The Austrians did not desire the downfall of Napoleon : on the contrary, they wished to keep him on the throne ; but with the frontiers of 1792 ; and, for that reason, were now purposely slow in their operations, in order to give him time to reflect, and to convince himself that it was only by accepting the conditions of Châtillon that he could prolong his political existence.

The retreat of the French from Bar-sur-Aube, La Ferté-sur-Aube and Bar-sur-Seine did not lead Prince Schwarzenberg to conclude that Napoleon was no longer before him, and had probably set off after Blücher ; and his doubts were not put an end to, till Napoleon's march was reported to him by General Tettenborn, who with a detachment of some regiments of Cossacks had just at that time arrived in France. As we shall have several times occasion to speak of this partizan in the sequel, it is necessary to explain how he now came to be between the Seine and the Marne. Having been under the command of the Crown Prince of Sweden in the campaign against Denmark, he was ordered by His Royal Highness, at the conclusion of peace with that power, to march to France, with instructions to keep up the communications between Blücher and the corps of Bülow and Wintzengerode belonging to the army of the North. In the beginning of February he crossed the Rhine at

Cologne, made his way successfully through the line of the French fortresses, and arrived on the 13th February at Reims, where he found Baron Wintzengerode. From him he could learn nothing more than that the allied armies and Napoleon were in the neighbourhood of Troyes. From Reims he went on to Epernay, then occupied by General Benkendorf, who on the very day of his arrival received intelligence of Blücher being on his march from Mery to Meaux. This induced Tettborn to advance straight to the Aube, and not to halt till he should fall in with the enemy ; for he justly reckoned that Napoleon would turn his attention to the movement of the Silesian army, and certainly follow it. He proved right in his conjecture, for in the plains around Fère-Champenoise he came in sight of the deep columns which Napoleon was leading to the Marne. He instantly sent off couriers to Prince Schwarzenberg and Blücher with this intelligence, and allowing the French army to pass by his detachment, followed it up without losing sight of it for a moment, thus doing the true service of a partizan, which consists in furnishing faithful intelligence of the enemy's motions.

On setting out after Blücher, Napoleon left Marshal Macdonald in command of the troops opposed to the Grand Army, with orders to manœuvre in such a way as to check its advance as much as possible, and to conceal his absence. Macdonald being unable to defend the passage of the Aube, began to concentrate his troops around Troyes by marching to that town from Bar-sur-Seine, as did Marshal Oudinot from Vaudœuvres. The latter took up a position in advance of Troyes, at the village of Lobressel, near the little river Barse. At last Prince Schwarzenberg put his

army in motion on the 18th February, that is, three days after the successful combat at Bar-sur-Aube, and marched in the direction of Troyes. The troops advanced in three columns : the corps of Count Witgenstein on Piney ; that of Count Wrédé on Vaudœuvres ; and those of the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and Count Giulay on Bar-sur-Seine : the reserves remained at Chaumont and Langres. We must here remark that the principal forces of the Austrians having been detached and sent to Lyons agreeably to the resolution of the council of war, there remained only one of their corps in the Grand Army, to wit, that of Count Giulay, who was now joined by a few Austrian battalions of reserve which were not previously under his orders. The Prince of Hesse Homburg had been appointed commander-in-chief of the Austrian army of the South.

On the 19th February it was resolved to attack the enemy's position at Lobressel. Prince Gortchakof, acting commander of the corps of Count Witgenstein, was ordered with the mass of his troops to turn the enemy's left wing, and Count Wrédé to attack in front. By one o'clock the Russians were in order of battle waiting till the signal gun should be fired in the corps of Count Wrédé. At three o'clock the signal was given, and the troops moved on ; Prince Gortchakof marching straight on Lobressel, and Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg round the enemy's left flank. Both were in close column with artillery in front, and the third division of cuirassiers in rear. The French had hardly time to fire a few cannon-shots, when, seeing that Prince Eugene was in the act of turning them, they began to retreat, pursued by the cuirassiers, who rode

down two battalions, and took three guns. The enemy retired under the walls of Troyes, and their rear-guard formed in the suburbs called St. Parre. On the following day at ten o'clock in the morning, Prince Eugene approached their position, but the French, without waiting to be attacked, retreated into the town from whence they sent to request eight hours to evacuate it. As the Prince would not give more than half an hour, the enemy lost no time in leaving Troyes, which was immediately occupied by the Allies, who marching through it by the opposite barrier, continued to follow the two Marshals. The French deliberately retired, and on the 26th February crossed over to the right bank of the Seine, where they took up a position at Provins.

Prince Schwarzenberg, with his usual tardiness, sent troops in pursuit of the enemy by the same roads by which they had advanced after the battle of Brienne, Raiéfsky's corps taking possession of Nogent, Count Wrédé's of Bray, and the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg's and Count Giulay's of Sens.—In these circumstances the Field Marshal did not undertake any thing; justifying his inaction by saying that he desired to remain true to the system approved of in the council of war at Bar-sur-Aube, by which it was determined that the armies of the South and of Silesia should act on the offensive, and that the Grand Army should in the meantime remain on the defensive.

If we consider the discordant opinions now reigning in the Grand Army on the subject of military operations, and the scruples of Prince Schwarzenberg, and take into account that the consequences of Blücher's daring attempt on Paris were unknown, the position of

the Allies must appear in the highest degree unfavourable, and the more so, that the hostile disposition of the people was daily showing itself in acts of open warfare both in flank and rear. In another point of view, affairs had taken a turn so favourable as to give undoubted promise of success ; for the cabinets had at length become sensible that their force consisted in unity of will. They had begun to see that difference of opinion had been productive of momentary defeat, while harmony could not fail to triumph over Napoleon, as the events of 1813 had proved beyond the possibility of contradiction. This conviction was the exciting cause which gave birth to a treaty concluded at Chaumont on the 17th February, by which Russia, Prussia, Austria and England became bound, in the event of Napoleon not accepting the conditions of Châtillon, by every means in their power to continue the war for the attainment of a peace, which should guarantee the inviolability of the rights and independence of nations. In furtherance of this end, each of the four Powers engaged to keep 150,000 men in the field ; and on no account separately to make terms with the common enemy. It was further resolved that this treaty, whose object was to restore the balance of power and to place an effectual barrier to the arbitrary invasion of the rights and territories of independent states, should remain in force for twenty years.

Such was one of the most important diplomatic acts of modern times, and one which raised an insurmountable wall of defence against Napoleon and the French revolution. If it should be asked, why we associate Napoleon's name with the idea of revolution, we have to answer, that he, like all the rulers of France who

have sat, one after the other, during a period of forty years on the throne of the Bourbons, was, with relation to Europe, merely the temporary representative of the revolution, the instrument and defender of its pernicious principles, which tend to shake the lawful sovereignty of hereditary monarchs, a sovereignty which offers the chief, indeed, the only security for the tranquillity and welfare of nations. The treaty of Chaumont bridled Napoleon's passion for conquest and domination beyond the boundaries of France, and imposed on him the necessity of conforming his actions to the order of things existing in Europe. On the other hand, it infused mutual confidence into the contracting parties, and so fortified their union, that if faithfully observed, it might bid defiance to all Napoleon's efforts. It is a coincidence which we cannot here pass by in silence, that the oldest of the allied monarchs who signed the treaty, the Emperor Francis, died on the very day after the lapse of the twenty years' term of the treaty of Chaumont.

The immediate effects of this treaty were quickly visible on the congress of Châtillon, and in the conference at Lusigny. With regard to the former, we left it at the moment when the Allied Sovereigns, on the 3d February, dispatched orders to their plenipotentiaries to sign the peace on the conditions resolved on at Langres. On the 5th February a rough draft of the conditions of peace was presented to Caulaincourt, with an intimation that this was to be considered as an answer to his letter to Prince Metternich, requesting an armistice, to which the monarchs had not consented. The French Minister listened in silence, and when the project was read over, asked unofficially, and as it were

merely out of curiosity, about the future destiny of the Allies of France, such as the Kings of Saxony and Westphalia, and the Viceroy of Italy; he added that he would lay this project before his court. It was presented to Napoleon while he was intoxicated with his successes between Seine and the Marne, and thus it is not difficult to conceive the indignation with which he rejected the terms offered by it. "I am nearer to Vienna than the Allies are to Paris," said he, and in place of a definite answer, ordered Caulaincourt to spin out the negotiations as long as possible. Such was the state of the affairs of the congress when the treaty of Chaumont was concluded. As soon as it was signed, the circle of Popilius was drawn around Caulaincourt; for he was told that within ten days he must give an answer to the project of peace, and that if he did not, the congress would be considered as closed.

The same conduct was observed towards General Flahaut. As a supplement to the instructions with which Count Shuválof had been furnished on his departure for Lusigny, the Emperor ordered him peremptorily to insist, that during the armistice the allied troops should keep possession of Belgium, Reims, Chalons, Vitry, St. Dizier, Chaumont, Langres, and Dijon. There could be no doubt that this would be opposed by General Flahaut, who, at his first meeting with Count Shuválof, gave him to understand that Napoleon was disposed to conclude the armistice only from a conviction that peace would be concluded on the terms offered at Frankfort. It followed that Napoleon would not place the half of his Empire in the hands of the Allies, while he calculated on having the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees for his frontiers. In

the course of a few days, when our troops had ceased to retreat, and Blücher had set off for the Marne, Napoleon justly concluded that the Allies had cooled in their wishes for peace, and that they were about to resume the offensive. He then desired a proposal to be made for a suspension of hostilities during the conference, but Count Shuválof, agreeably to the instructions of the Emperor, said to the plenipotentiary: “Why should we now have recourse to a measure which you formerly reckoned inexpedient?” Finally, after the treaty of Chaumont was signed, it was intimated to General Flahaut that he must, within twenty-four hours, accept the conditions offered to him by the Allies. He refused to do so, and thus ended the conferences at Lusigny, at which the views and intentions of both parties, that is, of Alexander and Napoleon, were too widely at variance to allow of any hope of accommodation.

The only question now remaining to be resolved was, whether Napoleon would accept the conditions of Châtillon; but being in full march after Blücher, he could only think of one object,—how to crush him. In the following chapter we shall give an account of their struggle; but previously we must follow the Grand Army, and explain what took place in it during Alexander’s stay at Chaumont.

Prince Schwarzenberg did not avail himself of Napoleon’s movement against the Silesian army by taking decided measures, for which he enjoyed many favourable opportunities. Having 90,000 men under arms he might have routed Macdonald, who had not more than 30,000; or, leaving a corps of observation against him, have followed Napoleon with the rest of

his troops. If either of these operations appeared to be attended with too great a risk, he had it in his power to move towards the Marne to take possession of the bridges, and there wait for Napoleon; thus keeping as near Blücher as he could. It would be vain to reply that while he was making this movement, Augereau might have threatened the communications of the Grand Army, for the Marshal was now opposed by 50,000 Austrians, who were sufficiently strong to put such an attempt out of the question. Not one of these plans was adopted by Prince Schwarzenberg, who, with that fondness for reconnoissances, peculiar to irresolute generals, confined himself to frequent surveys of the position occupied by Macdonald between Nogent and Provins. His whole attention was directed to Blücher's motions and those of the Austrian army of the South. For this reason, though the corps of the main body of the Grand Army were posted at Nogent, Bray, and Sens, the reserves of Count Barclay were kept at Chaumont; for the Field Marshal was still afraid of an attempt from Lyons on our rear, which these reserves were destined to oppose.

The Emperor Alexander, who remained at Chaumont till the 1st of March, never ceased pressing Prince Schwarzenberg to be more active, and Prince Volkonsky communicated to him His Majesty's pleasure that the reserves should approach nearer to the army, and that the latter should take a new direction. It is worthy of especial notice, that at this time, that is, a fortnight before the battle of Arcis, the Emperor directed the attention of the Commander-in-chief to that town, to which he had even resolved to transfer his own head-quarters. His Majesty had already foreseen

that if Napoleon, on terminating his expedition against Blücher, should resolve to march against the Grand Army, his attack would be made, as it afterwards was made, from Arcis, because no other direction was so favourable to the French. For supposing that Napoleon, as in the beginning of February, should again resolve to march against the Grand Army from Provins and Nangis, he could only, even in the event of success, force back the heads of the columns to a certain distance and no more, while, by issuing from Arcis, he would attack us both in flank and rear.

We shall now give some extracts from Prince Volkonsky's correspondence with Prince Schwarzenberg, which will bear witness how clear, and how just, was the Emperor's view of military events. On the 24th February, Prince Volkonsky made the following communication to the Field Marshal:—"The Emperor considers that the advance of the Grand Army to Sens is drawing us away from the enemy, and that it is therefore indispensable to direct all our forces to the right towards Arcis, between that town and Vitry, and in all events to reinforce them with the reserves which should be ordered to move forward." On the 27th February, three days after, he writes, "In consequence of intelligence received from Field Marshal Blücher, the Emperor considers it indispensable to begin to move by the right wing between Arcis-sur-Aube and Vitry. It is His Majesty's desire that you should lose no time in reporting your opinion on this important subject." On the next day Prince Volkonsky wrote him as follows:—"I hasten to communicate to your Highness the reports received from Count St. Priest. His Majesty has charged me to

inform you, that according to his opinion it is now more necessary than ever to act on the offensive."

In his answers, Prince Schwarzenberg only presented various plans of movements which he intended making according to the information he should receive of the operations of Blücher and Napoleon. At length His Majesty himself wrote to him; and, from the Field Marshal's answer, dated the 1st of March, we may form some idea of the contents of the Imperial rescript, no copy of which is to be found among the papers, for this reason, probably, that the original was forwarded straight from the Emperor: "I have the honour to report that the corps are continuing the movement which I ordered the day before yesterday, keeping to the right, and I think, I have made preparation for every movement which circumstances may render necessary. To-morrow I shall expect your Majesty's arrival to receive your commands. Your Majesty will allow me, with that sincerity to which you have long accustomed me, to express to you how painful it is for me to see, by your letter, that 'henceforward my hands will be completely unbound, and that I may act in conformity with military calculations!' Never, Sire, were my hands bound; I have always acted according to military combinations; I think I have manœuvred well, and I should manœuvre as I have done, were I to begin again;—this is my confession. It is my duty to state that if my arrangements have not met with the approbation of the monarchs, I and my principles are alone to blame. How fortunate would Napoleon reckon himself if he could imagine that such doubts had found access to the monarchs at the very time they are accomplishing the mighty task

of the deliverance of Europe ! I know, Sire, that in your magnanimity you will graciously receive these explanations which a frank-hearted soldier lays at your feet."

On the day after receiving this letter, the 2nd March, His Majesty, after a fortnight's stay at Chaumont, set out for Troyes, the head-quarters of Prince Schwarzenberg. Before his departure, an order was sent to the plenipotentiaries at the Congress, "that if Caulaincourt should desire to know the *ultimatum* of the monarchs, they should answer, 'that it is stated in the project of the peace communicated to him, with the exception of trifling alterations, which, however, must not touch the substance of the project.' If the ministers should declare that they reckon this Congress to be closed on the part of France, and if Caulaincourt shall request a delay till he receive the decision of the Court, you are to refuse and to answer that the negotiations may be renewed, should Napoleon make new proposals, at the head-quarters of the allied monarchs. The plenipotentiaries will add, that these proposals will be entertained if they be sent without delay, and be conformable to the project of the peace as minuted on the 5th February."

It now only remains to notice the last circumstance which occurred at this time ; I allude to the arrival on the theatre of war of the Count d'Artois, who, with his two sons, had left England in the beginning of the year. The Duke of Angouleme made his way to the Duke of Wellington, the Duke of Berry arrived in the island of Jersey, and the Count d'Artois entered France through Holland and Switzerland. On reaching Vesoul he immediately wrote to the Emperor, expressing

his wish to obtain a personal interview, “having,” as he said, “something to communicate of peculiar importance to the welfare of France, and the glory of the Emperor.” His Majesty answered him from Chaumont, “that he could not comply with his wish,” and repeated what his Royal Highness had been told before leaving London, “that the aim of all the exertions of the monarchs is the conclusion of a durable peace; that their Majesties will take no part whatever in the internal changes which may take place in France, and consequently will neither encourage the expression of public opinion in favour of the Bourbons, nor thwart it.”

CHAPTER X.

Advance of the Army of Silesia to the Marne—Marmont retreats—Blücher crosses the Marne at Meaux—Blücher's retreat to Soissons—Capitulation of Soissons—The Russians cross the Aisne—Napoleon orders the people to take up arms—Defence of Soissons—Success of Count Worontzoff—Battle of Craonne—Death of Generals Lanskoy and Ooshakof—Of Count Stróganoff—Affair at Laon.

FIELD MARSHAL BLÜCHER having received the Emperor Alexander's consent to his march on Paris by the Marne, immediately moved off with his army from the environs of Mery, his object, as we have seen, being to draw Napoleon away from the Grand Army. We are now to show how far he succeeded in his attempt, and to trace the march of the army of Silesia during this campaign of a fortnight.

On starting from Mery, Blücher's army consisted of the corps of Sacken, York, and Kleist, amounting to 50,000 men under arms. In addition to these, the Emperor having placed at his disposal the two corps of Wintzengerode and Bülow, belonging to the army of the North, Blücher ordered the former not to stir from Rheims, and the latter to march through Dammartin on Paris. At the same time he sent the following instructions to Count St. Priest, who had just arrived at Vitry from the Rhine. "As soon as Napoleon hears of my march, he will either send a corps down the

Seine for the defence of Paris, or follow me in person through Nogent and Provins ; or, in fine, will endeavour to cut off my communications with the Rhine, and raise the blockade of the fortresses. It is, therefore, my intention that you should halt at Vitry, with your division, and take under your command the Prussian General Jagow's detachment of 6,000 men, and at the same time stop all the small parties which are coming on from different places, and attach them to your corps. With these forces you are to assure my communications with the Grand Army, watch the passages of Arcis, Lesmont, and Dienville, and to keep up your connexion with me through Epernay and Reims, by means of the corps of Wintzengerode. If Napoleon should follow the Silesian army, or detach a corps to Paris, you are to join me, by forced marches, through Chalons, Reims, and Fismes. It is also my desire that you everywhere give out that you have from 20,000 to 30,000 men under your command, and that you issue a proclamation to the people, stating that you have come among them, with so great a force, in order to preserve peace and tranquillity ; but that you will burn every town and village in which insurrection shall break out. At the same time, you will advise the French not to give credit to the lying reports spread abroad by Napoleon of his successes, and assure them that the object of our movements has been to draw him on to Troyes, in order that the Silesian army, which he pretends to have destroyed, may advance without interruption to Paris."

Count St. Priest having laid a copy of these instructions before the Emperor, His Majesty was pleased to confirm them, and to order, with the view of more

effectually securing the communications between the Grand Army and that of Silesia, that Count Platof's detachment should be removed to Arcis, and placed under the command of Kaissárof. The Ataman himself was invited to head quarters, where he remained till the end of the campaign. Kaissárof afterwards crossed from Arcis to Sézanne, and sent out parties to Fère-Champenoise and Reims, as the country around the latter was beginning to be the theatre of war.

On the 13th February, Blücher crossed the Aube at Anglure, where he posted the Russian troops, under the command of Sacken, on his left wing, and the Prussians, under Kleist and York, on his right, and then advanced on Sézanne. Here he expected to beat Marmont, who, with a small corps of about 8,000 men, was almost in the same situation as Olsoofief had been in at Champaubert, being unexpectedly brought in contact with an enemy more than six times his superior in force. The difference between them consisted only in this, that Olsoofief had been ordered to keep his position, cost what it might, while Marmont, being bound by no such order, had a right to manœuvre according to his discretion. Orders were given to the cavalry to turn the French on the following morning, keeping out of the range of their guns, and to watch for the favourable moment to attack. The infantry, in two columns, was to charge the French, if they showed any intention to keep their ground. Agreeably to this arrangement, the cavalry marched out of the camp in the morning, but it was merely to be spectators of Marmont's retreat. It is supposed that the inhabitants had given him notice of the arrival of the army of Silesia, time enough for him to give it the

slip. Blücher attributed this failure to the Generals in command of cavalry, who excused themselves by saying, that the orders were couched in general terms, without a positive indication of the time and place, when and where to attack.

From Sézanne, Marmont did not retreat on Coulommiers and Meaux by the straight road to Paris, but turned off to La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, in order to get near Marshal Mortier, who, after the battle of Montmirail, had been left by Napoleon between Soissons and Château Thierry, to watch the allied troops, that had entered the north of France from the Netherlands. The two Marshals succeeded in effecting their junction at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. Here again Blücher was highly displeased with the Prussian General of his advanced-guard, who, by not giving him timely notice of Mortier's movement, had deprived him of the means of preventing it.

On reaching the Marne, Blücher made his arrangements for taking the town of Meaux, in order to advance straight from thence to Paris. To accomplish this, he tried to deceive Marmont and Mortier as to the nature of his intention ; and with this view, having split his army in two, he ordered the Prussians to repair the bridges which had been burned by the French at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, to cross the Marne at that place, and to make a false attack on the Marshals ; while the Russians, under the command of Sacken, were to take the town of Meaux. Sacken took possession of the suburbs on the left bank of the Marne, and made ready to attack the town itself. If it had been taken, Blücher's plan would have been crowned with success, for Mortier and Marmont would

have been turned and driven away from the great Paris road; but they took care not to fall into the snare, and hastened to Meaux, where they arrived at the very time our troops were making an attack on the town. In consequence of the movements of the French, Sacken was ordered to give up his attempt on Meaux, to cross to the right bank of the Marne at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and close up to the Prussians: this he accomplished on the 17th February.

The roar of Sacken's cannon, during the attack on Meaux, reached the suburbs of Paris, whose inhabitants listened for the first time to the distant sounds of hostile artillery: and that artillery was Russian, thundering at less than forty versts distance from the French capital. There the light-hearted people were still celebrating Napoleon's successes over our rear-guards, and the retreat of the Allies from Troyes. The troops in reserve, the recruiting dépôts and skeletons of regiments were immediately sent off to reinforce Mortier and Marmont who had taken up a position on the right bank of the Ourcq. While Blücher was preparing to attack them, and his corps were endeavouring to cross that river at different places, he received from Tettenborn the important and joyful news that Napoleon in consequence of the movement of the Silesian army from the Aube to the Marne, had given up following the Grand Army, and was marching with all speed after him. Thus were fulfilled the hopes of the Prussian commander, and the end gained for which he had separated from the Grand Army. Putting off his attack on the French Marshals who were before him on the banks of the Ourcq, he marched on the 18th February to Oulchy on the Soissons road, having sent

orders to Wintzengerode and Bülow to advance to that place.

It was only on the 15th February, that is two days after the event, that Napoleon was informed of the army of Silesia having broken up from Mery. Having entrusted Macdonald as we have seen, with the command of the troops destined to watch the Grand Army, he instantly marched from Troyes with the remainder, in number about 40,000, and followed Blücher through Arcis-sur-Aube and Sézanne. He kept constantly pressing the march of the columns, for every hour's delay seemed to double his fear that Blücher, after routing Marmont and Mortier, was already under the walls of Paris. Early on the morning of the 19th February, Napoleon arrived at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, where, from the steep banks of the Marne, he could see the rear-guards of the Silesian army, slowly retiring in the direction of Soissons. Immediate pursuit was out of the question, for the Allies had broken down the bridges of the Marne. The French now set to work to repair them, and, by labouring without intermission, enabled the troops to begin crossing on the evening of the following day.

Napoleon's plan was to beat Blücher before he could cross the Aisne. This appeared so much the easier that the main passage of that river is by the stone bridge of Soissons, which was again in the hands of the French, they having re-occupied that town immediately after General Wintzengerode left it for Reims. In order to effect his purpose, Napoleon ordered Marmont and Mortier to follow Blücher by the high road to Soissons, while he himself crossed at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and marched through Château

Thiérri to Fismes. He chose this route for two reasons ; first, as it would enable him to cut off Blücher's retreat on Reims and his line of communication with the Grand Army, and secondly, because he could either fall on his left wing, or turn it.

On retreating from the Ourcq, it was Blücher's intention to give battle at Oulchy, where he expected to be joined by Generals Wintzengerode and Bülow, whose corps amounted to 50,000 men. " You have already been informed," he thus wrote to the former on the 18th February, " by our flying detachments, that I have gained my object, and that the Grand Army has been relieved of the enemy. That nothing may separate me from you and General Bülow, I have set out for Oulchy, and it is therefore necessary that you should unite your troops with mine before the battle, which it is my intention to offer. If you are not already between Fismes and Soissons, it is absolutely necessary that you make all haste thither, with your whole corps. Let me know where you are at present."

The Field Marshal's intention of fighting at Oulchy could not be carried into effect, for Bülow was still on the right bank of the Aisne, which he found difficulty in crossing ; the commandant of Soissons having refused to surrender the fortress. Blücher thus found himself obliged to cross the Aisne, in order to put off fighting till he should effect his junction with Bülow. His ulterior views are unfolded in the following order to Wintzengerode on the 19th February. " As Soissons does not surrender, I have resolved to give battle on the right bank of the Aisne, and with that view have sent on the baggage to Fismes, and the

pontoons to Busancy, in order to throw several bridges over that river. Towards evening I shall march to that place with the army and begin to cross in the night. I desire you will send officers to select the most convenient points for the passage, that I may be able to reach it from Villemontoir or Busancy, and from thence to form in position beyond the Aisne. You will then send to Busancy for the pontoons, and put up the bridges: at the same time you will let me have officers to lead the columns from Villemontoir and Busancy, that no disorder may arise during the darkness of the night. In the course of the day you will pass the Aisne with your corps at Vailly and take up such a position near Soissons, as will prevent the garrison from troubling my march by sallies. The whole of my cavalry remains behind: it will cover the movements of the army, and cross the Aisne to-morrow morning. If possible, I should wish the bridge to be thrown over about Venizelle; but if there is likely to be any difficulty I can march on Vailly."

The situation of the Field Marshal with a river before him, on which bridges were not yet put up, was hourly becoming more difficult; for Marmont and Mortier were making continual attacks on his rear-guard, and Napoleon's movement from Chateau Thierry to Fismes was threatening his flank. At this critical moment, the gates of Soissons were suddenly opened, an event which completely changed the face of affairs, enabling Blücher to cross the Aisne by the stone-bridge, and unite with Bülow. This saved the Silesian army, not from defeat, for Napoleon was two marches behind it, but certainly from heavy loss,

during the passage of the Aisne in the presence of an enemy.

The following are the particulars of this fortunate and unexpected incident. Generals Wintzengerode and Bülow, on arriving at Soissons, the former from Reims, and the latter from Laon, called for the surrender of the town. The answer was a refusal, with an intimation from the commandant, that he would order the flag of truce to be fired on, if the demand should be repeated. There were eighteen guns on the rampart and 1500 Poles in the town, under the command of General Moreau. These troops, unequal to a prolonged defence, had been ordered to sustain an assault, and to defend themselves to the last drop of their blood, in order to give the French army time to fall on Blücher's rear-guard during the passage of the river. On receiving the unsatisfactory answer of the commandant of Soissons, Generals Bülow and Wintzengerode did not make up their minds to storm the town. The former confined himself to firing a few cannon shots into the town, while the latter, with skirmishers, attacked a part of the suburbs which several times changed masters, but at last remained in our hands. This affair lasted till the evening, when, on account of the darkness, the troops evacuated the suburbs in order to pass the night in the plain. Here many could not help reflecting how gallantly Chernischéff had achieved the conquest of Soissons but a fortnight before, by forcing his way, with an insignificant detachment, into a town of such importance in a strategical point of view, before which two numerous corps now stood hesitating to go up to the assault.

About midnight, General Wintzengerode called a

council, at which it was resolved to attempt to storm the fortress on the following morning, but previously to try if it were not possible to induce the commandant to surrender it. For this purpose, at one o'clock in the morning, Wintzengerode sent Colonel Löwenstern to Soissons with full power to conclude a capitulation, leaving the conditions to his discretion; the grand object in view being to secure a safe passage of the Aisne.

The Colonel immediately set off, but notwithstanding the signals of the trumpeter who accompanied him, bullets whistled about his ears as he approached the enemy's line of sentries. At last he reached a picket under the command of an officer who told him he had strict orders not to admit any flag of truce, nor receive letters for his superiors. The negociator wishing in some way or other to let the commandant know that he was at the advanced posts, begged the enemy's officer to send into the town for some wine, on the pretext that as the night was very cold they would do well to warm themselves. The officer at once complied, without suspecting the intention of the Colonel Löwenstern, who was in hopes that the soldier sent for the wine, would let it be known in Soissons that there was a Russian officer at the advanced posts, and that the commandant might desire to learn the object of his visit. The trick succeeded, and an officer shortly made his appearance, who pretended to be visiting the posts, but in whom, from his uniform, it was not difficult to recognize an aide-de-camp. Löwenstern began, among other things, by telling him that defence must be vain, as there were two corps before the town determined to mount to the assault before day-break.

After some talk he pretended a wish to retire ; but the aide-de-camp requested him to wait a little, saying he would announce his arrival to the commandant to whom he carried the letter from Baron Wintzengerode. He soon returned to say that the commandant had agreed to receive the Russian officer, who was now conducted into the town with his eyes bound.

Finding the commandant in the midst of a council of war, Löwenstern announced that the destruction of the French was inevitable, as the garrison would be put to the sword and the inhabitants abandoned to the fury of the assailants. Having given the council only ten minutes for reflection, the commandant at last agreed to surrender, on condition that the garrison should be allowed to join the French army with six pieces of cannon. After some feigned opposition on the latter head, consent was given, and it now only remained to draw up the articles of capitulation.

At this moment word was brought to the commandant that General Bülow had sent to the advanced posts Captain Martens, the same who was not long ago ambassador at Constantinople. Wishing to avail himself of this ready means of communicating his success to Bülow, Löwenstern requested the commandant to admit the Prussian officer, and, on his arrival, invited him to sign the capitulation along with him. In order to see it carried into effect, Captain Martens and the Emperor's aide-de-camp, Pancrátief, remained in the town, and Colonel Löwenstern, having thus cleverly brought about the surrender of the fortress, returned to Count Wintzengerode who gladly ratified all the conditions. Somebody having remarked that it was wrong to allow the French to take more than

two guns along with them, it being unusual to give more to an enemy voluntarily evacuating a fortress, Count Worontzoff justly answered: "that in the present circumstances, the surrender of Soissons was of such importance, that it would even be allowable to make the French commandant a present of some of our own guns on the single condition of his evacuating the fortress on the instant."

Immediately after the ratification of the capitulation, Worontzoff in person led his troops to take possession of the city gates. At the very moment of relieving the French guard a cannonade was heard in Blücher's rear-guard, announcing the approach of the enemy, and proving that if Soissons had held out but one day longer, the army of Silesia would have been deprived of a safe and easy passage of the Aisne. The pusillanimity of General Moreau affords one proof more, that the strength of fortresses, with whatever skill and care they may have been constructed, does not depend so much on the works, as on the bravery of him to whom the defence is entrusted. Nothing sets this truth in a clearer point of view than the events which occurred in Prussia after the battle of Jena, when Magdeburg, Cüstrin and other strongholds, which had been placed under the command of feeble old men, or faint-hearted Generals, one after another, opened their gates without firing a shot.

And thus for the second time during this campaign, the surrender of Soissons opened a safe retreat to the army of Silesia. Baron Wintzengerode now sent forward Major-General Benkendorf's division of cavalry to meet Blücher, whose rear-guard had for some

days successfully resisted the furious attacks of the French.

Without delaying for a moment, Blücher crossed on the 20th February to the right bank of the Aisne, where he was joined by Wintzengerode and Bülow. The corps of these two Generals presented an aspect very different indeed from those of the Silesian army. The latter, from the day they had crossed the Rhine, had been, almost without interruption, engaged in obstinate combats and forced marches. They had had no home but the bivouac, where they struggled with the inclemency of a cold and stormy winter. Both men and horses were exhausted, the uniforms and shoes worn out, and the commissaries' waggons empty. The regiments of the army of the north, on the contrary, who, in the preceding year under the command of the Crown Prince, had carried on a deliberate methodical war in a regular campaign, and, with the exception of General Chernisheff's detachment, had not yet taken part in actual hostilities, but remained in comfortable cantonments, were complete as to number, and in the highest order in point of health, spirits and equipment. Add to this that they had brought with them an abundant supply of provisions. When these corps had joined Blücher the number of his troops exceeded a hundred thousand men, and he now resolved to accept the combat between Soissons and Laon. The left wing of his army nearly extended to Craone, and his right to Soissons, the defence of which was entrusted to General Rudzévitch. To observe the motions of the enemy on the left bank of the Aisne, the Field Marshal sent General Chernisheff's detachment across the river with instructions to

march to Braine and Fismes, and in case of necessity to retire to Vailly, where, in Blücher's order, there was said to be a bridge.

As the army of Silesia hurried through Soissons, the troops, artillery and baggage blocked up the streets. In these circumstances, Chernisheff's detachment could only pass in single file, so that it was with the greatest difficulty he made his way out of the town with his six regiments of Cossacks. He had sent two regiments of infantry which had been attached to him, straight to Vailly with the view of their afterwards rejoining him, for he never doubted the existence of the bridge mentioned in his instructions. As soon as the half of his detachment had made its way through the army of Silesia and reached the left bank of the Aisne, he ordered Colonel Benkendorf to go on before, intending to follow him with the remaining three regiments. At Braine, Benkendorf fell in with the quarter-masters of Napoleon's head-quarters, took them prisoners and went on to Fismes; but he was there attacked by a great body of the enemy's horse. The superiority of the French made resistance out of the question, and Benkendorf hotly pursued, retreated in time. About half-way, he met Chernisheff, who immediately drew up his Cossacks in a long line. On seeing them the French gave up the pursuit, thinking no doubt that there were more troops behind the Cossacks. The quarter-masters who had been taken prisoners, having unanimously declared that Napoleon was in the neighbourhood of Fismes, Chernisheff having executed Blücher's order, had nothing for it but retire with all speed through Vailly, for it was now impossible for him to remain alone on the left bank of the Aisne, almost in sight of

Napoleon's head-quarters, and separated by the river from the army of Silesia. But how great was his surprise when one of his men, whom he had sent to Vailly, returned with a report that there was no bridge there ! Planks were hurriedly laid, and rudely fastened together, and on these Chernisheff led all his six regiments of Cossacks across the river, and rejoined the army of Silesia. The operations we have now described form the first part of the campaign which Blücher undertook from Mery. We shall now proceed to the second, which proved beyond comparison the most bloody, and to the Russians the most fruitful in recollections of military glory. Here we shall see with what success Rudzévitch resisted the attacks of Marmont and Mortier, how Count Worontzoff fought with Napoleon for six hours together, and how Chernisheff routed Ney.

Napoleon had hardly reached Fismes when he learned the fall of Soissons, which proved a death-blow to his hopes of attacking Blücher before he should have passed the Aisne. This news even shook the nerves of the French troops who had purposely been buoyed up with the hope of surrounding the Russians and Prussians, and of forcing them to lay down their arms. In order to give the troops fresh confidence in his fortunes, and to excite them to undergo new hardships, Napoleon ordered it to be given out, that an unforeseen event, the disgraceful surrender of Soissons, had prevented the defeat of the Allies and the deliverance of France. The retreat of the army of Silesia, beyond the Aisne, was the more grievously felt by him, that it drew him away, he knew not how far or how long, from Paris, and from the proper line of his

operations between the Seine and Marne. He was obliged, whatever it might cost, to fight with Blücher and to drive back, as far as possible, his indefatigable opponent, before he could turn his attention with effect to the Grand Army. Every day, every hour, was precious to him now that he was in continual expectation of hearing that Schwarzenberg was acting on the offensive, or of seeing him appear in his rear; and yet Napoleon could not meet him, till he had disposed of Blücher, who, now that he had crossed the Aisne, could retreat farther and farther, towards the northern frontiers of France, and draw Napoleon's army after him.

Napoleon's rage, on receiving the intelligence of Blücher's successful passage at Soissons, explains the motives which induced him to issue a decree by which the war was declared national. He required the French to arm in mass, and assist the troops in attacking and destroying the Allies, to break down the bridges behind them, fall upon the baggage and stragglers, and on the flanks and rear of our armies; at the same time, denouncing the pains of treason against every magistrate of town or district, who should dissuade the inhabitants from a general rising. Even from this decree we may see how implacable was Napoleon's hatred to our countrymen; for it is said that its chief object was to restrain the atrocities of the Russians and Cossacks. With his peculiar penetration Napoleon doubtless foresaw the approaching end of his career, and being unable to beat the Russians in the field, gave full scope to his vindictive feelings towards them as the chief, or rather the sole, authors of his fall. Having shaken his power to its foundations in

1812, they had arrived in France to complete his ruin.

In order still more to inflame the passions of the people, all the Parisian newspapers, then the trumpets of despotism, as they are now those of universal insurrection, were filled with descriptions of the imaginary cruelties of the Russians. The fruitful imagination of the French writers was inexhaustible in calumny ; being stimulated by the gold which was liberally showered upon them by the government. To give their lying stories some appearance of truth, they printed them in the form of letters from the theatre of war. The absurdity of their inventions knew no bounds : a Frenchman, for instance, was made to say, that he had seen with his own eyes, on the shoulders of every Russian, a torch destined to set fire to Paris.

The newspaper writers were equally unsparing of the Prussians, but of the Austrians hardly a word was said. They were more indulgent to the latter, because it was the anxious endeavour of Napoleon, during the whole course of the wars, to withdraw the court of Vienna from the general alliance. By this show of respect for that Court, he thought to make his subjects believe that his bonds of connection with Austria were not broken, though at bottom he was probably convinced that these bonds had no influence whatever on the lofty sentiments of the Emperor Francis. Posterity will acknowledge with gratitude the mighty act of self-denial of that virtuous monarch who refused to listen to the voice of a father's heart, when the good of mankind was at stake.

Having signed his decree for a general armament, which, however, the local authorities took no measures

to carry into execution, although the peasants took arms in great numbers, Napoleon passed twenty-four hours at Fismes, in order to concentrate his forces, and make arrangements for going on with the campaign. From Fismes he continued his advance to Berry-au-Bac with the intention of there crossing the Aisne, and falling upon Blücher's left wing. Marshals Marmont and Mortier were ordered at the same time to take Soissons, which Rudzévitch, as we have seen, had been left to defend. On the 21st February, at day-break, the patrols gave notice to Rudzévitch that the enemy was approaching in deep columns by the road from Château-Thierry. He immediately ordered the arrangements for defence, which he had made the night before, to be carried into execution. The principal reserve of his corps stood behind the houses in those quarters of the suburbs which lay nearest the town; the second reserve was posted on the rampart, the sharpshooters were in the outskirts of the suburbs, and the artillery was placed at the different points where it was likely to do most execution. A part of the cavalry was left in the town to act in case of insurrection among the inhabitants; the remainder took post on both sides of Soissons to report the movements of the enemy, and to watch the roads from Braine and Compeigne. In case of retreat, the cavalry was ordered to concentrate on the Laon road at Crouy, and each detachment was provided beforehand with a guide. The Prefect's house was cleared for the wounded, and the medical officers made all the usual preparations. Having put every thing in order, Rudzévitch rode round the ranks, and reminded his men of what they owed to

their Sovereign, and to the honour and glory of the Russian arms.

At seven o'clock in the morning, Mortier and Marmont attacked the suburbs in their whole extent, but were beaten off; a second attempt was equally unsuccessful. In the beginning of the affair, they forced back our skirmishers so close to the reserves, that a very narrow space was left between the combatants. Every time the attack became more warm, Rudzévitch appeared in the midst of the troops, when their fire instantly redoubled. In the suburbs, occupied by the French, the enemy unroofed many of the houses, hoisted up cannon to the top floor, and from thence fired on the Russians, who were posted on the ramparts; while below, an incessant fire of musketry was kept up at less than pistol-shot distance. The combat lasted till late in the evening; yet the Marshals, although their troops were double the number of those of Rudzévitch, were unable to wrest a single house out of his hands, or to make him yield an inch of ground. At ten o'clock the cannonade ceased, and the French retreated to the extremity of the suburbs, where they posted their line of sentries. Thus the Russians, with the loss of 1,500 men, kept possession of Soissons, which the French had not been able to defend; for we have seen that in the month of February the town was twice taken, once by assault, and again by capitulation. We must not pass over in silence, that on the night before the assault, Count Langeron arrived at Soissons from the Rhine, and that on the day of the attack, he placed his troops at the disposal of Rudzévitch, offering to act under his subordinate officer, and afterwards took every occasion to exalt the merit of his exploit.

We shall now return to Blücher, who had taken up a position between the Aisne and the little river Lette, on the elevated and very narrow plateau which extends on the one side, to the road from Berry-au-Bac to Laon ; and on the other, to the road leading to that town from Soissons. The six corps of the army of Silesia were placed one behind another ; the first in order being Wintzengerode's at Craone. Having posted his army in this strange position, where it could neither manœuvre nor deploy, the Field Marshal removed his head quarters to Chavignon, and there waited for news. On the 21st February, he received a report that the French had forced Berry-au-Bac, beaten Generals Pahlen and Ilováisky, and, having got possession of the passage, were advancing to Corbeny by the great road to Laon. He instantly resolved to leave his position by a movement in advance, and to descend into the plain at Craone in order to meet the enemy, and stop his advance to Laon. At two o'clock the following laconic order was sent round : " The army will march to Craone. The corps in their present order of battle will follow one after the other. Advantage must be taken of the ground, to send powerful masses of cavalry and infantry to right and left along the road. If a battle should take place, the cavalry must be kept in great masses."

This disposition could not be carried into effect ; for the army had hardly moved off its ground, when it was known that Napoleon had occupied Craone, and the woods and defiles around it, through which the army of Silesia must pass in order to attack him. The Field Marshal was now obliged to take measures for covering his new line of operations between Laon

and Avesnes, and of keeping up his communications with the Netherlands. These considerations, however, were not sufficient to induce Blücher to march with his army on Laon, for he reckoned that Napoleon would probably not march on that town till he had beaten our troops, who were behind Craone, and opposite to his left wing. He resolved to cover Laon with one division of his army, with a second to make head against Napoleon at Craone, and with a third to turn his right wing and get into his rear.

The following were the arrangements made for carrying this complicated plan into execution: General Bülow was sent off to defend Laon; the corps of Sacken and the infantry of Wintzengerode, under the command of Counts Worontzoff and Stroganof, were charged with the defence of the position near Craone, and to withstand the attack of Napoleon's whole forces, while Wintzengerode with the cavalry of the other corps, amounting to 10,000 men, and sixty guns, was ordered to cross the Lette at Chevregny, and by by-roads to reach Fétieux on the great Laon road and fall upon the right wing or the rear of the French. York was sent to take post on the road between Soissons and Laon, Rudzévitch was ordered to keep possession of Soissons, and Kleist and the remainder of Langeron's corps received orders to follow Wintzengerode, and according to circumstances, reinforce the attack of the cavalry or cover Laon.

All these dispositions were made on the 23rd February, while the French army was advancing to Berry-au-Bac, and from thence to Corbeny: — from some soldiers of the French guard who had been taken prisoners by the Cossacks, it was ascertained that Napo-

PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF CRAONNE.

26th Feb. 1811



Lith'd by I. Leffere, Norman St

leon in person was at the latter town. On the extremity of the left wing of the Silesian army, Count Worontzoff was posted near Craone, with orders to retreat to a position at Heurtbise, as soon as the enemy should begin the attack. At four o'clock in the afternoon two French divisions approached Craone which was occupied by Major General Krassóffsky with the 13th and 14th regiments of light infantry. One of these divisions marched on the town and the wood to the left, and the other straight on Heurtbise, with the evident intention of cutting off the retreat of our advanced guard from Craone. While Count Worontzoff was defending himself, Count O'Rourke, who had volunteered to take the command of the troops in Craone, retreated in good order. On this occasion, the 13th regiment of light infantry particularly distinguished itself. Its commander, Colonel Maéffsky charged ten times with the bayonet and lost 16 officers and 400 rank and file. The remaining officers, of whom hardly one had reached the age of twenty, took the places of their fallen comrades and fought with such valour against the old French guard, that from that day the 13th regiment of light infantry attracted that general admiration which it has never ceased to justify in the fullest manner. The enemy did not confine himself to an attack on Count Worontzoff's advanced guard, but poured troops into the wood near Heurtbise, in order to cut off Count O'Rourke, who was retreating to that village. The French who at first had been driven out of the wood, again became masters of it, and even occupied the road to Heurtbise. As it became necessary to make a decisive charge, Count Worontzoff led on the 14th light regiment and a brigade of infantry, and charging

the enemy with the bayonet, cleared the wood which no attempt was afterwards made to retake. At the conclusion of this affair, in which two Russian brigades beat off two divisions of the French guard, Count Worontzoff posted his advanced line for the night in the wood near Heurtbise and led the remainder of the troops to a position on the road to Bray which had been fixed on beforehand.

Some perhaps may be inclined to regard as exaggerated, the success obtained by our two brigades of the line over two divisions of Napoleon's guard whose exploits have so often been the favourite subject of the pencil and the graver, and the theme of prose and verse ; but it is nevertheless a fact which cannot be disproved. It should be added however, that these two brigades were the flower of Count Worontzoff's corps, and consisted of the 13th and 14th light infantry, and of the Tula and Navaguinsky foot regiments, which had been formed out of old unattached grenadier battalions.

In the course of the day General Bülow marched to Laon, and towards evening Baron Wintzengerode set out to make the circuit prescribed to him, to be followed by Count Langeron and Kleist. Napoleon halted at Corbeny for the night, waiting till he should see whether Blücher was going to retreat to Laon or to remain at Craone. Having ascertained that the Allies remained in their position at Craone, he resolved to attack them on the following morning. Here again the ground was occupied by the Russians alone, who were thus once more singlehanded to dispute it with him. Could Napoleon be otherwise than filled with rage against Alexander, now the only obstacle to the

peace, and whose troops were everywhere the first to meet him in the field !

Few positions are better adapted for defence than the elevated plateau behind Craone. On the left of it flows the Lette between steep banks, and on the right are deep ravines ; so that it is impossible to attack it, with a fair prospect of success, otherwise than in front. An attacking army, however strong, cannot avail itself of superiority of number by deploying its whole force. In this position, which had been chosen by Major General Poncet, stood the Russians, with orders to keep Napoleon at bay, till General Wintzengerode with his ten thousand horse, supported by corps of infantry, should come upon his rear.

Count Worontzoff drew up his troops in the following order. The 21st and 24th divisions and two brigades of infantry, composing his corps, were drawn up in two lines : the cavalry brigade of Major General Benken-dorf, consisting of the Pavlogradsky hussars and four regiments of Cossacks, was posted on the right flank, being the only spot on which horse could act, a circumstance which had made it unnecessary to leave a greater body of mounted troops with this division of the army. The flanks were protected by the deep ravines of which we have spoken.

In front of the position where the attack was expected, on a smooth but rather narrow piece of ground, thirty-six pieces of cannon, under the command of Colonel Vinspar, were so placed that the enemy could not attack otherwise than under their fire. One troop of horse-artillery took up a position in front of the left flank at the extremity of a ravine, from whence eight guns could play on the *flank* of the advancing enemy, and four

more were placed still farther to the left, on the road leading from the village of Elle, on our left flank. Besides these, the guns of another troop of horse artillery and six guns in battery were turned against the enemy's right. Behind Count Worontzoff's two lines of infantry stood the detachment of Count Stróganof in reserve, and still farther to the rear, between Cerny and Bray, the corps of Sacken. From this disposition, it is evident that equal forces would never have dared to attack the position at Craone, under a fire of artillery in front and flank. In Count Worontzoff's corps there were 13,000, in Count Stroganof's detachment 5,000, and in the reserve under Sacken 9,000 men.

The morning of the 23rd February was passed by both armies in making preparations for battle. Napoleon, from the heights on which his army stood, personally surveyed our position, and concentrated his corps, while Blücher waited for the appearance of General Wintzengerode in rear of the French. He had intended remaining in person in the position at Craone ; but he soon learned that the troops, which had been sent to turn the enemy, had not only not reached Fétieux, but were still far from their place of destination. Surprised by this unexpected intelligence, he sent orders to General Kleist to take the start of Wintzengerode, and march on Fétieux. He then sent for Sacken, to whom he entrusted the chief command of the troops destined to fight with Napoleon, and set off after General Wintzengerode, to ascertain in person the reason of his delay.

Soon after, about nine o'clock in the morning, on the hill where the affair of the rear-guard had taken place on the preceding evening, two columns of the

enemy began to descend the ridge and march straight for the wood, where our skirmishers, under the command of Major General Krassoffsky, were posted as a sort of advanced guard; a third column, without guns, entered the ravine on the left wing. Perceiving that the French were attacking in earnest, Count Worontzoff ordered Krassoffsky to retire from the wood to the position, and the artillery to be in readiness. To strengthen the left wing, and prevent it from being turned, he ordered thither the 2nd regiment of light infantry, one battalion of which descended into the ravine. Two squadrons of the Pavlogradsky hussars were likewise sent from the right flank to the left, in order to cover the guns in battery which were much in advance of the position. Count Worontzoff now waited, for the enemy, who quickly occupied the wood at Heurtbise, and on coming out of it, advanced to the plateau in close columns of infantry and cavalry with artillery. Napoleon had appointed Marshal Victor to command the centre, General Nansouty the left wing; Ney had the right, which was destined to turn and rout the left flank of the position. As our artillery was admirably placed, Napoleon, in order to dismount it, ordered a hundred guns to play upon it.

Hardly had the French completed their preparatory arrangements when a murderous fire opened on both sides. The Russians being formed in three lines, within narrow bounds, sustained a heavy loss, whole ranks being mowed down, but the infantry never wavered, while the artillery, was served with such skill and effect, that the French columns of infantry and cavalry advancing to attack it, were thrown into disorder by its fire, and compelled to retreat. “ With respect to the artil-

lery," says Count Worontzoff in his report, "I had only to look on with admiration, and rejoice in the destruction which it wrought among the enemy."

Napoleon, as if ashamed of the ill success of his operations against forces so inferior to his own, ordered the attack to be renewed. The cavalry of his guard took the lead, and Marshal Ney advanced by the ravine to turn our left wing. Here the Marshal made a great effort, but his column having been wasted by the fire of our artillery and charged at the point of the bayonet by the 2nd and 19th regiments of light infantry, the attack completely failed. At the same time, the French made an attempt to turn the right wing, by the advice of a Mr. Bussy, who had been Napoleon's fellow-soldier in the beginning of the revolution, but had afterwards retired from the service to reside on his estate near Craone. On the evening before the battle he presented himself to Napoleon, accompanied him during the action, and on the strength of his accurate knowledge of the localities, persuaded him of the practicability of the attempt. The depth of the ravine, the badness of the roads and the well-aimed discharges of six guns placed there in good time having defeated the attempt, Napoleon again turned his attention to the left flank and the centre. Notwithstanding the unceasing fire of 48 guns, he formed close columns against the centre, and with others again made an attempt to turn the left flank. The battery of the mounted artillery stationed here, was for a moment in great danger, and some men, even in the second line, were killed by musket-shots. A battalion of the 19th light infantry and the regiment of Shirvan rushed forward with the bayonet and retook the horse artillery, which was for some minutes in the

enemy's possession. A brigade of infantry now arrived from Count Stróganof's detachment, and the fight was restored to a state of equilibrium.

Count Worontzoff had already received two orders from General Sacken to retire, if the enemy should press upon him with overpowering forces; but he did not stir, being in hourly expectation that Wintzenge-
rode would fall upon Napoleon's rear. Besides, he resolved still to hold out, not merely because he confidently relied on the bravery of his troops, but being exposed to such severe attacks, while he had only one regiment of regular cavalry, it was easier for him to repulse them where he was, than during a retreat. At length Sacken sent a third order, commanding him to retire without loss of time, as by a change of plan the whole army, his corps included, had been ordered to Laon. He promised, at the same time, to send cavalry to the Count's aid.

The retreat was difficult, for two reasons: in the first place, because the enemy had redoubled the fire of his guns and dismounted many of ours; and, secondly, owing to the movement of Blücher's army to Laon, of which Napoleon could not be ignorant, and had therefore every reason to consider the destruction of the small corps opposed to him as beyond a doubt. Napoleon once more sent forward troops into the ravines to turn the flanks, and drew up large masses of infantry and cavalry to strike a decisive blow on the centre. In these circumstances it was the heroic firmness of the Russian infantry alone, which could save the corps from destruction, the more so that a deficiency of ammunition had already begun to be felt.

At two o'clock in the afternoon Count Worontzoff,

having made his regiments form in squares, ordered the retreat of the infantry to begin in ordinary time, and by alternate squares, and the artillery to follow. All the dismounted cannon, twenty-two in number, with the gun-carriages, were carried off to the rear, as well as the wounded whom it was possible to remove. As soon as Napoleon perceived the retreat, his attacks became much more impetuous, and nearly overpowered the right flank ; but Major-General Benkendorf, with the Hussars and Cossacks, attacked the French, and effectually checked them on that point. Seeing the extraordinary perseverance of the French, Count Worontzoff several times ordered the infantry to halt in order to repulse them, and then retreated as slowly as possible, showing that he was retiring, not because he was obliged to do so by the enemy, but in obedience to orders. During the retreat, the superiority of fire was on the side of the French, on account of their numerous artillery, while Count Worontzoff's fire was slacker from the want of sufficient force in horse-artillery ; but during the four hours he remained in position, his artillery had decidedly the advantage.

At this moment Vassiltchikof came up with Lanskoy's division of Hussars and Ooshakoff's dragoons. Their appearance in the action was the more necessary, that the field was becoming wider, and allowed the enemy's cavalry to turn our flanks. Vassiltchikof, Lanskoy, and Ooshakoff, by continually renewed attacks, gave aid to the infantry ; several of the horse regiment charging eight times. While the enemy were pressing hardest upon the horse, the latter, owing to the narrowing of the field, were obliged to halt in order to allow the infantry to pass. In this spot there

was, by good fortune, a yard surrounded by a stone wall, which the 6th Light Infantry was ordered to occupy. This the enemy did not expect, and in their eagerness to attack the hussars and dragoons, came almost close up to the wall, when they were effectually checked by a volley from the troops posted behind it.

In the meantime, Sacken had ordered General Nikétin to draw out the whole artillery, and after allowing the troops to pass, to open his fire. A considerable eminence, sloping towards the enemy, and closed on both sides by steep rocks, offered an admirable position for the guns. To this narrow ridge, which it was impossible to avoid by going round, the enemy now rushed forward in masses. In the first line of the battery were placed thirty-six light, and in the second, at the distance of sixty paces, twenty-eight heavy guns, opposite to the intervals in the first line. When every thing was ready, General Sacken ordered the regiments, as they marched past the guns, to remain on the flanks of the batteries. As soon as they came in line with the artillery, the cannonade opened; the first line firing by alternate guns with round and grape, the second firing in like manner with round shot and grenades. The carnage among the French was now horrible, yet they continued to advance in close columns along the narrow ridge. The thicker they pressed on, the greater was the havoc; till at length the slaughter was such that their advance was impeded by vast heaps of the dead and dying. The French artillery several times ceased firing, but Napoleon kept constantly sending fresh troops to the attack; these, too, after sustaining immense loss, were obliged

to retire. The cannonade lasted not more than twenty minutes, the enemy having at length desisted from his attacks: this was about five o'clock in the afternoon. Count Worontzoff now sent a part of his corps to Chevregny, and the rest to Laon, where the whole army of Silesia had been ordered to concentrate.

The battle of Craone is one of the most renowned feats recorded in the annals of the Russian arms, and the brightest ornament of Worontzoff's military career: the immediate reward of his exploit was the order of St. George of the second class. Fighting for a whole day with the French army, far superior to him in numbers, and led by Napoleon in person, he did not yield an inch of ground, till the order for him to retire had been thrice repeated. He left in the hands of the French neither prisoners nor guns, neither gun-carriage nor ammunition waggon: the enemy's only trophies were the dead bodies of our countrymen. Like Waterloo, Craone might have proved the last day of Napoleon's career, if during the time he was straining every effort to annihilate the Russians on the plateau, by bringing all his troops into action, Generals Wintzengerode, Kleist and Count Langeron had charged the French rear as had been ordered. Success would have been certain, especially if Blücher, instead of disseminating his forces, had marched to that point with all his corps, and had reached the ground in proper time. This was not done, yet nevertheless, the troops appointed to withstand Napoleon, gloriously discharged their duty. Their valour and zeal, however, were not fully appreciated; for as it was not thought fit at the time, to publish the real causes of the failure of the circuitous movement on the enemy's flank and rear, the battle of

Craone, so far from being painted in its true colours, was represented merely as an ordinary, though obstinate affair of the rear-guard. Add to this, that within a month after it was fought, occurred the mightiest event of modern times, the downfall of Napoleon. By its vast importance it swallowed up the past and consigned it to a temporary oblivion. The happy and speedy conclusion of the war, which people had begun to look upon as interminable, threw into the shade exploits mighty in themselves, but from which public attention was drawn away by the most important political changes.

The battle of Craone is also one of the few in which to withstand an enemy superior in numbers, the most judicious dispositions, and the example of a general in chief are not sufficient; for owing to the narrowness of the field of action, it was impossible to manœuvre. There, as at Culm, the event of the day hung equally on the personal courage of officers and men. It was indeed a day of triumph for the Russian infantry, proving beyond a doubt, as even the enemy's historians have acknowledged, its superiority over that of the French. In their wish to excuse the failure of Napoleon's obstinate attacks on this day, and to save the honour of their countrymen, they say that with the exception of the guard, and the regiments arrived from Spain, the greater part of his troops consisted of raw levies, while the Russians were veterans. In alluding to the French writers, it is but fair to add, that the battle of Craone has been described by them with more truth than the other battles of the campaign. The only circumstance which they have misrepresented is Count Worontzoff's retreat, which they attribute to

his having been turned. We have seen that Napoleon's numerous attempts on the flanks were uniformly defeated, and that the Count's retreat was the consequence of a third order to that effect given him by his superior, and dictated by the obvious consideration that further defence of the position at Craone had become useless, when there remained no doubt that the troops sent to Fétieux could not reach it.

In this battle there was hardly a regiment that did not distinguish itself by some notable exploit which the hand of time has almost effaced from memory. The second regiment of light infantry, single-handed, struggled successfully during some hours with Napoleon's young guard under the command of Marshal Ney. The foot regiment of Bootúirka, being surrounded by the enemy's cavalry, formed square, under a heavy fire of grape, and charging the horse with the bayonet, drove them off the ground. The regiment of Shirvan, being exposed to a murderous fire of grape shot, Major-General Laptief, who commanded the first line, went up to it in order to address a few words of encouragement to the men, when the grenadier companies of the two battalions asked permission to storm the battery. "Do so in God's name!" answered Laptief, and himself led them to the attack. During the advance the General received a severe contusion which obliged him to quit the field of battle, but the regiment went on under the command of its colonel, Zarúikin. In the meantime the whole line had received orders to retreat, and the Shirvan regiment thus remained isolated and surrounded and charged repeatedly by the enemy's cavalry. Their cartridges being exhausted, the men, with drums beating, forced their way three times with

the cold iron, through the dragoons who were striving to cut them off, and rejoined the line, bringing with them, not only their colonel, who was shot through the body, but the wounded and dead officers. Major-General Poncet stood before his brigade on crutches. Having twice received orders to retire, he answered in the heat of the moment, that he was resolved to die, and would not retreat one step. Vúitch the commander of the division, went up to him, and receiving the same answer said : “ If it is your pleasure to die here, you may dispose of your person, but I order the brigade to retire.”

We do not pretend to increase the harvest of glory, reaped by Count Worontzoff on this memorable day, by giving our readers a few particulars of his admirable conduct. While in command for some years of the 13th and 14th regiments of light infantry, I often heard from the officers, whose recollections of Craone were then full and fresh, that the Count, notwithstanding a violent pain in the foot which he had strained on the evening before the battle, was ever in the thickest of a fire, which was compared by eye-witnesses to that of Borodino ; and that while the troops were retiring he frequently left one square to enter another. He often rode up to the regiments, and allowing the French to come within fifty paces, give the word of command to fire. His coolness inspired both officers and men with the confidence so necessary in critical moments, and his brilliant courage excited them to new feats.

The French acknowledged the loss of 8,000 men killed and wounded. In the number of the latter were eight Generals, among whom were Marshals Victor and Grouchy. Our loss amounted to 6,000. The hussar

regiment of Mariopol, in the course of three hours, lost twenty-two officers. Most of the Generals were wounded, and two of them died of their wounds ; the latter were Lanskoy and Ooshakóff who were reckoned among the most distinguished leaders of our cavalry. United by the closest bonds of friendship, fortunate in love, rivals in valour where danger was thickest, passionately attached to their profession, both fell on one field. Lanskoy would not consent to the amputation of his leg, which had been shot through with a bullet, and fell a sacrifice to a want of resolution so little in harmony with his usual fearlessness. Ooshakóff, on being mortally wounded, called out to his regiment : “ Halt, Courlanders ! ” and breathed his last. While speaking of those who laid down their lives at Craone, can we pass unnoticed the young and accomplished Count Stróganof who was struck by a cannon ball. The whole army sympathised in the death of this gallant youth of eighteen, who had grown up under the eye of the Emperor, and whose parents had been honoured with His Majesty’s warmest friendship.

It is painful to reflect that the mighty efforts made on this field were wasted, and that the streams of Russian blood which watered the heights of Craone were shed in vain ; for the troops who were to have come down upon the great Laon road at Fétieux, and to have carried disorder and ruin among the enemy’s parks, baggage and hospitals, and then to have charged Napoleon in flank and rear, did not reach their destination. General Wintzengerode, the evening before the battle, marched to Bray, but his advance was retarded by the difficulty he experienced in making his way through the corps of the army, which as we have seen,

were posted one behind another on the narrow plateau. At ten o'clock at night the troops were halted, and they remained stationary till daybreak, on account of the darkness of a February night, during which the General did not choose to lead his troops over the hills by narrow paths on which they could only advance two abreast, and in some places but in single file. At length, it being five o'clock in the morning, the advanced guard under Chernisheff received orders to move on, but the roads were so bad, and the banks of the Lette so steep, that the guns had to be lowered by men's hands, and required each more than ten minutes to be carried over. Here the question will naturally be asked: why were not the roads surveyed beforehand? In General Wintzengerode's justification we have to say, that this had been done by him, and that he had sent a report to Blücher, informing him of his having discovered a very short and convenient road, by which he was resolved to cross the country; but the Field Marshal having probably destined this road for the infantry, peremptorily ordered the cavalry to take the road pointed out for it in the instructions he had given. In such circumstances General Wintzengerode had only to obey. At ten o'clock in the morning, the advanced guard had overcome the local obstacles, and was standing on the opposite bank of the stream, where the cannonade of Napoleon and Count Worontzoff was distinctly heard. Here General Chernisheff received orders to halt, and wait till the whole corps crossed, that is, till three o'clock in the afternoon. During the passage of the river arrived Marshal Blücher, who persisted in his resolution of turning Napoleon, and seeing that the cavalry could not reach the Laon road be-

fore the evening, ordered Kleist to move on to his destination. Blücher thus wrote to Prince Schwarzenberg : “ General Kleist’s corps of infantry, which had been sent to the Laon road, surmounted every difficulty, and although it moved off ten hours later than Wintzengerode, reached Fétieux before him.” This it is true, but he ought to have added that Wintzengerode had been ordered to march by roads which were impassable in the night, and to have explained why the corps of infantry had not been sent off earlier. Kleist did not reach his destination before dusk, and took no part in the action. The only trophies of a manœuvre by which Blücher had hoped to rout the French army, were 600 prisoners taken by General Chernisheff in the enemy’s rear.

The battle of the 23rd February was of as little advantage to Napoleon as to the Allies. Had he come from Troyes to Craone but to lose 8,000 men, and to gain a few versts of ground, without reaping any real benefit? We can easily credit eye-witnesses, who say that on this occasion he gave way to despondency. “ At the close of this murderous affair,” writes his secretary, “ Napoleon, suffering from the agitation produced by the uncertainty of the combat, and worn out with fatigue, was in one of those moods in which the stoutest heart must be filled with a disgust for war.”*

When all was quiet on the field of battle, and Napoleon had found shelter for the night in a neighbouring hamlet, Count Flahaut arrived at his head-quarters to inform him of the unsuccessful termination of the conferences at Lusigny. In the same night too, a report was received from Caulaincourt, informing Napoleon

* Fain, Manuscrit de 1814.

that the ministers of the allied powers would not agree to make the smallest concessions, and had called upon him immediately to sign the peace, threatening if he did not, to close the sittings of the congress. This news and the idle waste of blood on the preceding day, wrought so powerfully on Napoleon's nerves, that he gave an order to shoot some Russian prisoners, which was carried into execution at the village of Vaurain. One of the neighbouring proprietors recounted to me the particulars of this inhuman action.

In the meantime Blücher ordered all the six corps to assemble at Laon, whither they kept marching during the night of the 23rd of February, and the whole of the following day. The rear-guard of the army was entrusted to Major-General Benkendorf, with orders to defend to the last extremity, the bridge where the Soissons road joins that of Laon, and along which the corps of Sacken, Stróganof, and Worontzoff were retiring. It was of the greater consequence to keep possession of this point, that it was indispensable to gain time for Rudzévitch, whom Sacken had ordered to march from Soissons to Laon. Major General Krasorsky's brigade, consisting of the 13th and 14th regiments of light infantry and one company of artillery, reinforced Benkendorf's detachment, which had sustained great loss in the battle of Craone. The regiment of Pavlográd, which had gone into action 900 strong, left the field with only 400 men. During the whole night, regiments, baggage waggons, the wounded, and at length Rudzévitch's corps, kept hurrying past Benkendorf's rear-guard, till at last men and horses got so entangled as materially to retard their retreat. If this circumstance had been known to Napoleon,

and if he had attacked our feeble rear guard, our troops would have been exposed to very great danger ; but the French were so exhausted, that they could not think of attempting any thing during the night.

This was the true reason why the French did not stir from their ground till ten o'clock the next morning. When they did advance, General Benken-dorf took advantage of the hilly ground, in order to conceal from them the weakness of his detachment, and checked their advance so effectually, that at mid-day he had not retreated more than four versts. Here he received an order to follow with the cavalry to Laon, and to give up the command of the rear-guard to General Chernisheff, who came up with the two foot regiments of Penza and Sarátof. The Field Marshal had ordered the latter to use every means to keep the enemy at bay, in order that the army might have time to take up a position at Laon ; "otherwise," added he, "I shall be obliged to retreat to Avesnes."

Napoleon had given the command of his advanced-guard to the bravest of his marshals, Ney, with an order briskly to pursue the Allies, and without fail to destroy their rear-guard. Ney moved on to Etouville, where Chernisheff had taken up a remarkably strong position on a narrow piece of ground, defended on both sides by impassable marshes. Two regiments of infantry and twenty-four guns defended the position, which the French immediately attacked ; but they were unable to overcome the stubborn resistance opposed to them. Chernisheff three times repulsed Marshal Ney, who, on the approach of night, gave up his attempts. When the affair was over, Chernisheff left in the position the regiments of Sarátof and Penza with six guns,

and posted the 13th and 14th regiments of Light Infantry with eighteen guns, in a second line near Chivi, at the distance of a verst from the first.

Napoleon was obliged to approach Laon at whatever hazard. Seeing the impossibility of driving Chernisheff from his position, he followed the advice of the inhabitants, who offered to lead his troops in the night round our rear-guard by two footpaths, which were little known. For this purpose a detachment was selected from the old guard, and placed under the command of Gourgaud, one of Napoleon's aide-de-camps, who was ordered to attack the rear-guard in flank, while Marshal Ney was pressing upon its front.

In the night of the 29th, this chosen detachment, following the guides, made its way in the dark to the flanks of the second line, in which the Light Infantry, worn out with three days' fighting, slept soundly, hardly dreaming of an attack. On a sudden the report of a musket-shot was heard, then another, and a third, and at length a running fire. In a moment all started up in the camp and stood to their arms, while no one could divine the cause of the alarm. The moment the firing began, General Chernisheff sent for the regiments which were in the first line, and as soon as they came up, retired in order with the whole rear-guard to the position at Laon.

On the same night Rudzéwitch joined the army of Silesia. Count Langeron had given him up for lost, thinking that the French would cut off his retreat; but Blücher offered to lay the Count a wager that there was nothing to fear for a General like Rudzéwitch. The event proved that the Field-Marshal knew his man, for Rudzéwitch, by forced marches, slipped

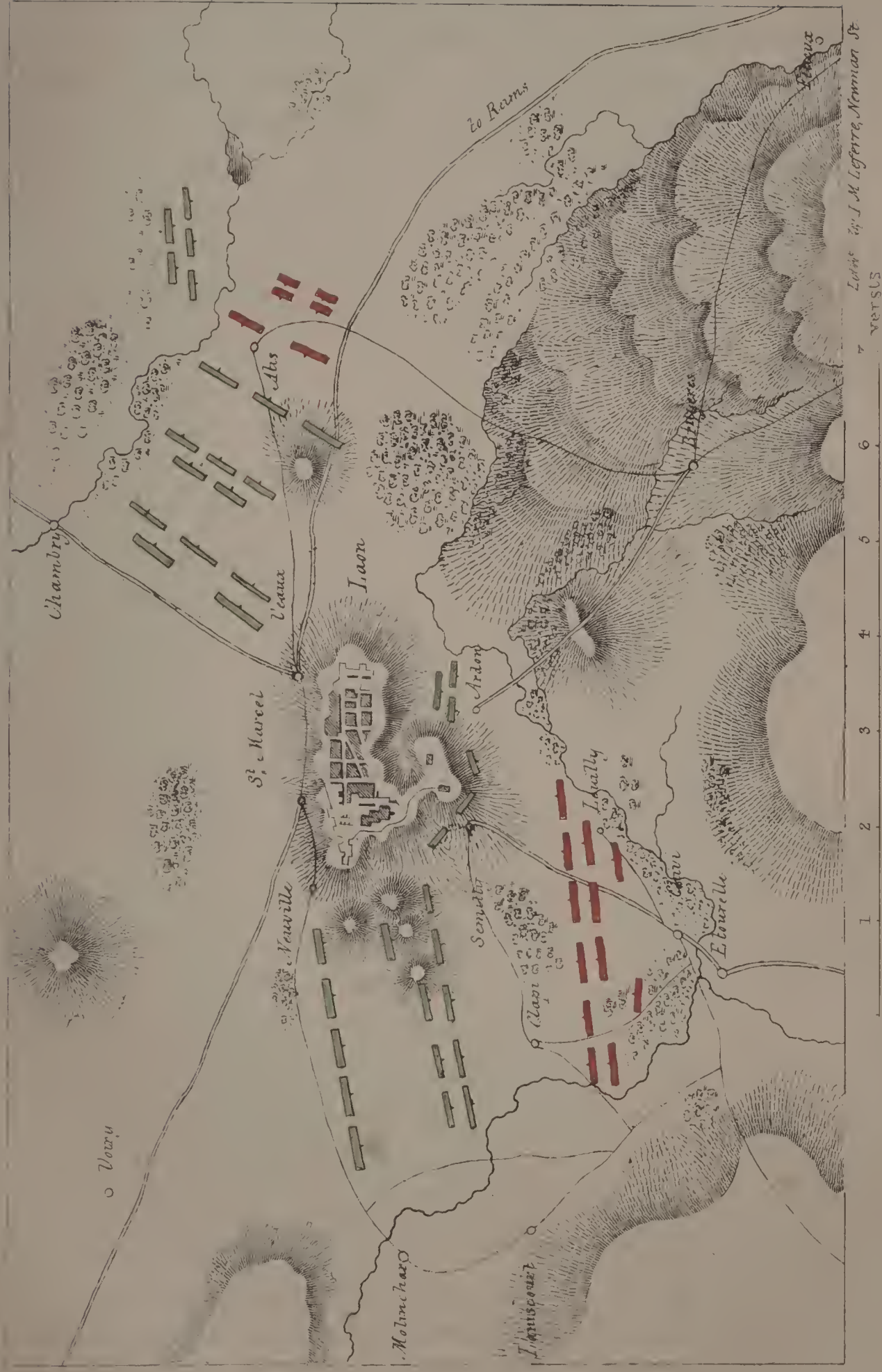
through the enemy's hands, and reached Laon without sustaining even the most trifling loss.

Here the Field-Marshal awaited the attack, which, on the part of the French, was attended with great difficulties, the position of Laon being naturally a very strong one. The town, surrounded by ancient walls and towers, stands on a lofty eminence, at the base of which, four villages form, as it were, as many bastions to it; Marcel and Veaux being on the north side, and Sémilly and Ardon on the south. Around the hill, and on its slopes, lay the allied army. Bülow occupied the town and the villages of Ardon and Sémilly, through the latter of which passes the great road from Soissons. To the right of Laon was posted the corps of Wintzengerode; on the left, York and Kleist, and backwards from St. Marcel, in reserve, Sacken and Count Langeron. There were 109,078 men in line, of whom 67,020 were Russians, and 42,058 Prussians. The French army hardly amounted to 40,000; for Marmont had not yet had time to arrive from Soissons to join it. These forty thousand regular troops, however, were reinforced by considerable bodies of national guards, but the number of these it would be difficult to ascertain with accuracy.

Before the battle, General Chernisheff proposed to the Field-Marshal to detach to the defiles at Chivi, from which the enemy must issue before forming, a number of troops sufficient to keep the French in check at that point, at least for some time. Blücher approved of this idea, but instead of sending thither one or two divisions, he detached but a single brigade of Light Infantry, which took possession of the wood at the entrance of the defiles. The French did not

PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF LAON,

25th & 26th Feb. 1814



long delay their approach. On the 25th February, early in the morning, they drove off the brigade, which narrowly escaped falling a sacrifice to the greatly superior numbers of the enemy. The French had sent cavalry with the view of cutting off its retreat, when Chernisheff, perceiving their intention from the hill at Laon, ordered one of the Cossack regiments to disengage the brigade, which, under this protection, came off without loss.

As soon as the French had got clear of the defiles, they attacked the centre of the position, the villages of Classy, Sémilly and Ardon; their skirmishers, concealed by a thick fog, even ascended the hill of Laon. About mid-day, the fog having cleared away, the Field-Marshal ordered a part of the troops to descend the hill and fall upon the enemy. This movement was executed with success, and the French were driven from the villages which they had succeeded in getting possession of but a few hours before. The fight was prolonged, with various success, around these villages; and though it occasionally became very warm, neither Napoleon nor Blücher thought the decisive hour was come. Each of them had his own reasons for thinking so. Before making a grand attack, the former desired to wait for the arrival of Marmont, who was following him from Soissons to Béry-au-Bac, and was on that day to arrive on his right wing, at the village of Atis. Napoleon kept constantly sending officers to him with orders to make haste. One of them was taken by the Cossacks and brought to Blücher. Having learned from him that Marmont was to act on the great Reims road, three versts distant from the right wing of the French army, which was leaning on

the village of Ardon, Blücher resolved to confound Napoleon's plans by attacking Marmont separately, when he should approach Laon. To do this, it was necessary to give him time to come up. It thus follows that Napoleon and Blücher were both waiting for Marmont, the former in order, on the following day, to make a joint attack with him on the position at Laon; the latter, in order to rout him separately before the general attack should begin.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, Marmont showed himself on the road from Béry-au-Bac, attacked Atis, and carried it. Night came on, the cannonade ceased along the whole line, and the troops retired to the bivouacs. Of the French, who were worn out by their long march from Soissons, and by the combat which had just ended, some lay down to sleep, while others roamed through the villages in quest of whatever they stood in need of. This was the moment Blücher had been waiting for, in order to carry his plan into execution, and anticipate Napoleon, who was preparing to renew the fight on the following day. Sacken, Langeron, a few regiments of horse under the command of Benkendorf, and the whole mounted artillery of the Russians corps of the Silesian army, marched to support the troops of Kleist and York, whom the Field-Marshal had ordered to close up in solid columns, and, without firing a shot, to fall upon the enemy. In the stillness of the night, and in perfect silence, the Prussians moved straight on to Atis. The King's brother, Prince William, who marched along the high-road, was the first to charge into the village with the bayonet. To the right and left the other troops followed his example, and General Ziethen, with the

cavalry, turned the enemy. Atis was carried in a moment. The enemy, taken by surprise in the bivouacs, had only time to fire one round of grape, and then took to flight, every where pursued by the horse and foot. The suddenness of the attack, the darkness of the night, the shouts of the troops, all contributed to the rout of the French. They fled with precipitation to Berry-au-Bac and Fismes, where Marmont at last succeeded in rallying the remains of his corps. Forty-five pieces of cannon, one hundred ammunition waggons, and more than two thousand prisoners fell into the hands of the victors, whose loss did not exceed three hundred men. In order to take full advantage of the victory, Field-Marshal Blücher resolved, with all his forces, to go headlong at Napoleon, who was still lying at Classy; and by falling at the same time upon his rear, to make the attack still more destructive. With this view he ordered York and Kleist to continue the pursuit of Marmont to Berry-au-Bac, and to open through Reims a communication with Count St. Priest. Count Langeron, and Sacken received instructions to march through Bruyères to Craone, and from thence to turn to the right on Napoleon's rear; Wintzengerode and Bülow were to remain at Laon, till Napoleon should begin his retreat from Classy, and the instant he moved, to follow him by the Soissons road. Agreeably to this disposition, at seven o'clock in the morning of the 26th February, Count Langeron, Sacken, York, and Kleist moved off to their destination, and the Field-Marshal remained in person at Laon, in hourly expectation, that after Marmont's defeat, Napoleon would retire on Soissons, through which lies the nearest road to Paris.

To pursue the enemy, he despatched General Chernisheff to Classy with a brigade of infantry, and appointed eight battalions to support him. In the midst of a dense fog, Chernisheff entered Classy ; but hardly had the weather cleared up when he found himself quite close to the French, who, so far from retreating, had just got upon their feet. The twenty-four guns he had with him immediately opening their fire, the enemy appeared confounded by the first discharge. Had Chernisheff's detachment been more numerous, the suddenness of its onset might have produced great confusion in the French army ; but on looking round, he perceived with surprise that the eight battalions destined to support him, so far from coming up to his aid, were in full retreat. This change was the consequence of an order from Blücher, who, seeing that Napoleon had not begun his retreat, had suspended the execution of his attack in front. This order had not yet reached Chernisheff at Classy, but the General, who formed his reserve with the eight battalions, without waiting for orders from him, as his immediate commander, on hearing that the attack was deferred, retreated of his own will. The General had now nothing left, but to return to Laon with all haste. In order to execute this movement without loss in the face of the enemy, he ordered Colonel Suchtelen to make a false attack with the Cossacks, under cover of which he retired to the position, and there took the command of Baron Wintzengerode's first line.

At nine o'clock in the morning Napoleon renewed his attack on the position at Laon, in order to engross Blücher's attention, and force him to recal the corps he had sent in pursuit of Marmont, and thus give the

Marshal time to collect his scattered troops. Hardly was the advance perceived, when orders were sent from head-quarters to Langeron, Sacken, York, and Kleist, desiring them to halt wherever the order should reach them, and to send the horse alone after Marmont. Afterwards, when the battle grew warm about Laon, and in the adjacent villages, these generals were ordered to return to the position. During the whole day the French kept renewing their attacks on the town and villages, but their constant failure at last induced Napoleon to retire. After mid-day his parks and baggage were seen drawing off towards Soissons ; they were followed by his army late in the afternoon, but the rear-guard remained on the field of battle, and kept up the cannonade till night. On the following day the whole French army concentrated at Soissons, with the exception of Marmont, who having collected the remains of his beaten corps, was lying at Fismes.

Thus ended the fighting at Laon, and along with it Napoleon's expedition from Troyes against the army of Silesia. It had worn out his troops, cost him 46 pieces of cannon, 12,000 killed and wounded, and, what was of infinitely greater importance, did not realize his hope of beating Blücher's army and driving it away from the theatre of war. It followed that the project, to effect which he had marched from Troyes, had totally failed, while the Field Marshal had fully gained his object by drawing Napoleon away from the Grand Army, and leaving it at full liberty to act. Blücher has been reproached for not annihilating Marmont, by pursuing him without intermission, and for withdrawing from Sacken and Langeron the order he had given them to attack Napoleon's rear. It is said that he

ought to have persisted in his first intention, the rather, that with the troops which remained with him, that is, with the corps of Wintzengerode and Bülow, he could have maintained the strong position of Laon against Napoleon's attacks. To meet this reproach it is necessary to state, that Blücher, who had been for some time indisposed, was on that day suffering so violently from ague and an inflammation of the eyes, as to be no longer master of his faculties, and that the chief of his staff would not venture to take on himself the responsibility of carrying into execution the order to advance which the Field Marshal had given at mid-night. He preferred concentrating all the troops at Laon when he saw Napoleon was renewing the battle in which Blücher was not in a situation to command in person.

It was therefore owing to the ailing state of Blücher that the French escaped a final overthrow, either under the walls of Laon, or during their retreat from that town. Napoleon not only succeeded in retiring without being molested, but even during his retreat, as we shall see, gained a decided advantage at Reims, and without being pursued, reached Arcis-sur-Aube in a situation to give battle to the Grand Army. At this time Blücher, the most indefatigable of the allied commanders, inflexible in his hatred of Napoleon, with an army under his command far more numerous than that of the enemy, remained till the 7th March, that is, nine days, in a state of complete inaction, placing his army in cantonments, and spending his time in making arrangements in the commissariat. "The true object of our stay here was not a military one," he thus wrote to Wintzengerode on the 2nd of March. "The only object I have in view is to give repose to a harassed

army, and as far as possible to provide it with bread." That to such a degree his bodily sufferings had gained the ascendant over Blücher's mental faculties is proved by the following occurrence. The quarter-master-general of Count Langeron's corps having waited on him at Laon for orders, found him sitting by the fire, apparently in deep meditation. He announced his arrival and requested orders relative to certain matters submitted to Blücher's decision by the commander of the corps. The Field Marshal answered not a word. The colonel repeated his questions, but still got no answer. He remained standing for some minutes before Blücher in a state of embarrassment, from which, however, he was at length relieved by General Gneisenau, who was sitting at a table in a corner of the room, and said to him : " Don't you see that the Field Marshal is not in a condition to give you an answer ?" The fact is, that from the day of the battle at Laon, Blücher was so weak, that during the remainder of the campaign, till the taking of Paris, he rode in a carriage, being unable to sit on horseback. By confining him to a sick-bed and not allowing him to assist in giving the death-blow to the French, it seemed as if fate had reserved the final destruction of Napoleon for that army in which Alexander was present. We shall now return to him, and remain with him till he planted his banner on the heights of Belleville and Montmartre.

CHAPTER XI.

Reims taken by St. Priest. — Retaken by the French. — General St. Priest dies of his wounds. — General Emanuel falls back upon Laon. — Concentration of the Grand Army at Arcis. — Battle of Arcis. — Napoleon crosses the Aube.

THE news of the victory at Laon was received by the Emperor Alexander on the day after his Majesty arrived from Chaumont at Troyes, where Schwarzenberg had his head-quarters. The Prince, as we have seen in the ninth chapter, had in consequence of the pressing instance of the Emperor, at length turned his attention to the right wing. To guard against danger in this quarter, Count Wredé's corps had been removed to Arcis, and the reserves of Count Barclay brought up from Chaumont to Brienne. The other three corps remained in their former positions, viz.:—Count Giulay at Sens, the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and Raiéfsky at Pont-sur-Seine and Nogent: these last were watching Macdonald.

Prince Schwarzenberg had received intelligence of the victory at Laon from Count St. Priest; but having as yet received no report from Blücher, he wished first to receive official confirmation of this fortunate event, that he might with greater safety make the necessary arrangements for further operations. While waiting for

Blücher's despatches, he resolved, on the following day, the 3rd of March, to attack Macdonald, whose corps was lying between Provins and Nangis. To this effect the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and Raiéfsky received orders to cross to the right bank of the Seine, at Pont-sur-Seine and Nogent, and Count Wredé to pass the Aube at Arcis and advance through Plancy and Villenoxe, to support the first two corps. It was not Prince Schwarzenberg's intention to crush Macdonald with the combined forces, but simply to force him to retreat, in order to be more at liberty in his own movements. On this account, the reserves did not follow these three corps, but were kept in readiness for every event between Brienne, Lesmont, and Arcis; Count Giulay too was left at Sens. The Prince's attention was not so much directed to Macdonald as to Napoleon's movements, if it should turn out that he had in reality suffered a defeat at Laon.

In the evening of the same day Brünneck, one of Blücher's aide-de-camps, brought the detailed account of the victory at Laon, and the news of Napoleon's having retreated to Soissons. Without regard to this, Prince Schwarzenberg affirmed it to be necessary to wait till Napoleon should have frankly indicated his ulterior movements. "Our chief object, at present," he thus wrote to Major-General Kaissárof, who had been specially charged to guard the passages of the Marne, "is to ascertain what the enemy will undertake from Soissons; on that must depend the direction we shall take."

Hardly had the corps destined to act against Macdonald set out for Provins, and the French Marshal evacuated that town and retreated to Maison-Rouge,

when, at four o'clock of the same day, a report was received of the taking of Reims by Napoleon, and the defeat of General St. Priest, by which our direct communication with the army of Silesia was cut off. Blücher's illness, as we have seen, was the cause of the feeble pursuit of Napoleon, who had retreated to Soissons without hindrance. There he learned that the Russians were again masters of Reims from whence they could act on the flank of the troops which he intended leaving at Soissons. On this account he resolved to march on that town, perhaps not without the hope of there gaining something like a victory, which might encourage his troops and efface from the minds of his subjects the painful impressions produced by his fruitless attempts against the Silesian army. Ordering Marshal Mortier to remain at Soissons to watch Blücher's army, he set off, on the 1st of March, with the remainder of his troops, for Reims, then occupied by Count St. Priest, to whose operations we shall now turn.

Agreeably to the order by which Field Marshal Blücher, on leaving Mery for Meaux, had left with Count St. Priest, it was the affair of the latter to keep up the communications between the Grand Army and that of Silesia. For this purpose he removed from Vitry to Chalons. Having there heard that Reims had been abandoned by the Cossacks, and was in the hands of the French, he employed General Emanuel to ascertain the fact. Having made his survey, in the course of which he dispersed several bands of armed peasants, the General reported that the garrison of Reims was weak, especially in cavalry. Count St. Priest now took under his command the detachment of

the Prussian General Iagow, and marched along with him to Reims. On reaching the town, he called upon the garrison to surrender, but the flag of truce was fired on with grape from the town walls, which were crowded with spectators. On retiring, the officer left a paper on the ground, in the sight of the enemy, containing an appeal to the garrison and inhabitants. Count St. Priest desired to make the attack on the instant, but he had hardly time to begin it, when cavalry appeared from Berry-au-Bac, which came up in time to enter the town. Presuming it was followed by infantry, he gave orders to cease firing and drew off to Sillery in order to wait the arrival of General Pantchulidzef, who was coming up to him from Mentz with a detachment of 5,000 men. The detachment arrived on the 27th February, and the next day, at day-break, was fixed on for storming Reims. General Iagow with the Prussians was to make a false attack, on the side of Fismes, and General Emanuel was sent with the cavalry to Berry-au-Bac, to cut off the retreat of the troops, who might quit the town: the Count in person resolved to make the true attack with the Russian regiments.

The columns marched from Sillery, in the night of the 27th February. The guide, who conducted the main body, lost his way, and was leading the troops backwards and forwards through the fields, when a cannonade was suddenly heard. It was that of the artillery of General Iagow, who had begun the false attack. Without much serious opposition he succeeded in making his way into Reims. Close after him came up Count St. Priest, against whom the French were hardly allowed time to open their fire. The infantry

rushed into the town, but as part of the dispersed French troops fired a few shots from the houses, our men began to plunder. Discipline, however, was soon restored, and an order given to put all, in whose possession plunder was found, under arrest, and to restore the stolen things to their owners. Two French columns, one of infantry and another of cavalry, succeeded in getting out of the town. The first, to the number of 600 men was attacked and broken, by General Emanuel, and the whole taken prisoners or drowned in the Vele; but the battalion of infantry, forming close column, coolly awaited the charge of our cavalry and repulsed it. Ten guns and some hundreds of prisoners were captured in Reims. For this feat Count St. Priest was immediately rewarded with the order of St. George of the second class. Having on this day ordered prayers to be said in the field, the Count went to the cathedral, after giving permission to the troops, for the sake of a little recreation, to amuse themselves in the surrounding hamlets. Thinking, after the defeat of the French at Laon and their retreat to Soissons, of which he had received intelligence from Marshal Blücher, that he had no danger to apprehend, he did not take the proper measures of precaution by sending out patrols.

About mid-day appeared the cavalry of Napoleon's advanced-guard, and charged the Prussians, who, to the number of six battalions consisting of Landwehr, had taken post on the road to Soissons. Expecting any thing but an attack, they had laid aside their ammunition and were washing their linen in the river. Many were cut down and many taken prisoners; the remainder fled with General Iagow, who had hardly time

to mount an unsaddled horse. The Prussians, however, at last got into square, and bravely defended themselves, notwithstanding that the half of them were in uniform, and the rest in their shirts, some even barefooted.

A Prussian horse-soldier, who had got the start of his comrades, now galloped into the town with the news of the attack. When it was reported to Count St. Priest, who was then in the church, he gave the following answer:—"It is doubtless an alarm caused by some partizan come from Epernay. Neither the French army, nor any of its corps, can have arrived from Soissons. If a partizan," he added, "has taken advantage of the negligence of the Prussians, they have themselves to blame." Another messenger soon arrived with a report that the enemy's numbers were constantly increasing, that they were not more than two versts distant from the suburbs, and that our guns, which had been placed there, might easily fall into their hands.

Count St. Priest was at length convinced, when he was told that the enemy had artillery, and that their leader was no venturous partizan marching with a handful of men to attack a populous city defended by infantry. He now rode off to the threatened point, and sent round an order for the troops to march to the Soissons suburbs. Some regiments, on hearing of the enemy's approach, had hurried to the point of attack of their own accord, without waiting for orders, and for a while checked the enemy's advance. The French General in command of the advanced guard, either in consequence of orders, or from want of resolution to approach the town with cavalry alone, contented himself

with his successful attack of the Prussians, and without attempting to advance any farther, threw out a line of flankers along his front. His guns too ceased firing and all remained quiet. This gave Count St. Priest time to form a part of his corps in order of battle. If our General had suspected the meaning of the enemy's momentary inaction, he would doubtless have instantly retreated; but he was deceived by his conviction that the enemy's army, after the defeat at Laon, would never think of retreating on Reims, and, by the information of a soldier, who declared that the approaching enemy was only Marmont's corps of 12,000 men, for whom Count St. Priest thought himself fully a match. Although another prisoner assured him that Napoleon was with the troops, the Count answered, "He will not step over 14,000 men!" And so certain was he of keeping his position, that on being asked by a regimental colonel whither he should retire in case of need, he replied, "There will be no retreat."

In no long time Napoleon arrived. Having glanced over our position, he dryly said, "*Les dames de Reims passeront un mauvais quart d'heure,*" and gave orders for the attack. All at once, from behind a hill, and a wood which had concealed the enemy, dashed on a numerous body of horse-artillery and opened the fire. The enemy's cavalry in close columns advanced from every side to the attack, which was chiefly directed on our left flank, against which Napoleon had concentrated 8000 horse. Then only Count St. Priest fully perceived the immense superiority of the enemy. He instantly ordered the second line to retire through Reims in the direction of Laon, while the first line was keeping the enemy at bay. Hardly had he

given this order when he was wounded in the shoulder by a ball. The Prussian battery, where he was standing, instantly retreated into the town, and the troops being overpowered, threw themselves into the suburbs, by the only bridge which here unites the steep banks of the Vele. Owing to the narrowness of the bridge and the streets, the columns got entangled at every step, and in less than a quarter of an hour became a mere mob. Such disorder must have brought complete destruction on the corps, but for a battalion of the foot regiment of Riazan, whose commander, Colonel Scóbelef, who was posted at the defile and still preserved his presence of mind, singly opposed the almost irresistible rush of the enemy. In the midst of this indescribable rout, he succeeded in forming his regiment in square, and, by repulsing three charges of an immense mass of cavalry, gave time to the artillery and baggage to get into the town. At length the battalion itself opened a passage with the bayonet and entered the town, with the wounded Count St. Priest, who had been carried into the square in the thick of the fight.

General Emanuel was giving orders in advance of the bridge, while the Riazan regiment was engaged. At the moment of the greatest danger, he called out to the men, "On you depends the safety of the corps!" He then returned into the town, hastily posted troops for its defence, and then rode off to seek the General who was next to St. Priest in the order of seniority. He found him beyond the town, consulting about what was to be done. This General, who had not quite recovered from a swoon, in which he had fallen from his horse in the very beginning of the enemy's attack,

declared that he was unable to take the command of the corps; and General Emanuel therefore took his place. As evening was approaching, it was resolved in the council to keep possession of Reims till the following morning, and then, if reinforcements should not arrive from General York, to retire to Berry-au-Bac. But the enemy, by fording the Vele, had already begun to march round the town. Another council was now called, in which it was resolved to retire immediately, and an order was then sent to the senior officer in Reims to evacuate the town. The messenger did not find the officer in question, who, on seeing himself about to be surrounded, had marched out without waiting for orders, leaving Reims in the hands of a brave non-commissioned officer of the 33rd Regiment of Light Infantry, with two hundred men chosen from all the regiments. He had ordered him to hold out to the last extremity, but with permission to surrender, if he saw no chance of escape. This handful of brave men, thus offered up as a sacrifice to Napoleon, never once thought of surrendering. General Emanuel's aide-de-camp found them encouraging each other, dividing their last remaining cartridges, and using every exertion for the defence of the town. Having received the order to retire, they fortunately escaped captivity, although they were obliged to force their way through the enemy. They were favoured by the darkness of the night, their own prudence, and Providence which watches over the brave. They now rejoined their regiments, the majority of which had taken the road to Laon, while the rest, in their consternation, had fled in the direction of Chalons. Ten pieces of cannon, one Russian and nine Prussian, fell into the

hands of the enemy. Within a fortnight, General St. Priest died of his wound at Laon, where a monument, with a suitable inscription, was erected to him, but which the French destroyed after the dethronement of the Bourbons in 1830.

Prince Schwarzenberg, having heard, on the 4th March, of Count St. Priest's defeat, changed the destination of the corps of the Grand Army. Giving up his original design of attacking Macdonald, who had already retreated to Provins, his intention was now to march through Chalons in order to join Blücher, as he thought the latter was certainly pursuing Napoleon without losing sight of him for an instant. To carry this new plan into execution, he ordered Count Wrédé not to stir from Arcis; the Prince of Wirtemberg and Count Giulay to march to Troyes through Pont-sur-Seine and Sens, the reserve of Count Barclay to remain at Brienne, and Raiéfsky, who was in sight of Macdonald, to keep that Marshal employed by false movements. Raiéfsky was further desired to retire to Pont-sur-Seine, if Macdonald should attack him, and if the Marshal should retreat, to pursue him slowly with the cavalry.

While these changes were being made, the Emperor Alexander remained at Troyes, which might now be considered the centre of the army. His Majesty had intended removing to Arcis, but on hearing of the capture of Reims by the enemy, he gave up his intention. With respect to Prince Schwarzenberg, Napoleon's new victory had thrown him into a state of great agitation. So far from preserving that coolness and presence of mind so necessary to a Commander-in-chief in difficult conjunctures, he seemed completely at a loss ;

and, as if to avoid meeting with the Emperor Alexander, kept shifting from one place to another. Those gloomy days are well painted in the following lines which we borrow from an autograph letter of His Majesty's Adjutant-General, Prince Volkonsky, to General Toll. "We ourselves don't know what we want. For God's sake tranquillise us with something or other. What pleasure can the Field Marshal have in keeping out of our way? We are merely losing time in written correspondence."

His Majesty was particularly anxious for the safety of Raiéfsky's advanced-guard under the command of Count Pahlen, who, after the general movement of the troops to Troyes and Arcis, was left alone to make head against Macdonald, by manœuvring against him in such a manner as to avoid a defeat in case of being attacked, and in the event of Macdonald's retreat, to make him believe that our advanced-guard was much stronger than it really was. Being resolved that this detachment should not fall a fruitless sacrifice to the superior numbers of the enemy, the Emperor ordered Pahlen to retire to the left bank of the Seine. In the following order transmitted by Prince Volkonsky to Raiéfsky, a route is even laid down for this retrograde movement.

"The Emperor having received your report to the Commander-in-chief, is very uneasy about the advanced-guard under Pahlen, which has been left on the other side of the Seine. I have received His Majesty's commands to send you two expresses, with an order, that you should this very night, without fail, bring over the advanced-guard to this side of the Seine at Nogent; for it would be difficult to pass at Pont-sur-

Seine (if there is no other road from Provins but that through Villenoxe) for this reason, that yesterday evening at seven o'clock, the enemy, in great force, obliged Major-General Kaissárof to retreat to Arcis, and was already in the village of Villers. It may thus easily happen that the enemy, having retreated from Provins to La Ferté-Gaucher, will take the direction of Sézanne, and from thence get into Count Pahlen's rear. As soon therefore as Pahlen's advanced-guard shall have crossed at Nogent and removed the bridges, both at that place and at Pont-sur-Seine, it is His Majesty's pleasure that you execute the orders you received from the Field Marshal on the evening of the 6th instant. Have the goodness to let me know by the bearer, for His Majesty's information, the exact spot where Count Pahlen is to cross."

While this was going on in the Grand Army, Blücher never stirred from his position at Laon. Having learned the success of the French at Reims, he thought Napoleon was getting his forces together in order to attack his left wing through Berry-au-Bac. For this reason, he concentrated his army about Laon where he prepared to give battle, for which he ordered embrasures to be made in the adjoining villages. Some days were wasted in this vain expectation, in the course of which Blücher fairly lost sight of the French army, as is plain from the following order sent by him to General Wintzengerode on the 3d of March.

"As I do not know what direction Napoleon has taken from Reims, it is my desire that you should send the light cavalry up the Aisne, and from thence detach parties to discover whether he has marched to Rethel,

Chalons, Epernay, or Berry-au-Bac, which are the only roads he could take."

How long and how complete was the Field Marshal's ignorance of the motions of his enemy may be seen by the following extract from his instructions to Baron Wintzengerode of the 7th March, consequently four days after the order we have quoted. "The inhabitants say that the enemy marched from Fismes to Reims; but that when the fog cleared away, they saw the French cavalry, artillery, and baggage, coming from Reims towards Fismes."

The Field-Marshal wavered in the midst of these contradictory reports, while he was suffering from illness and his army from hunger. "I am struggling with the greatest want of provisions (he wrote thus to Prince Schwarzenberg) the soldiers have been for some days without bread, and as I am cut off from Nancy, I have no possibility of procuring it. The enemy is still at Reims: Napoleon with the guard was there yesterday; from which I conclude that the Grand Army is still far from Paris." Not knowing how to get this letter conveyed to Prince Schwarzenberg, Blücher ordered it to be written on a small scrap of paper, and desired General Chernisheff to send it by an officer of trust, to the Grand Army, with orders to swallow it if he should be taken prisoner. At the same time another letter was given to the messenger which he was to show to the French in that event. It is needless to say that the tenor of the second letter was altogether different from that of the first, being purposely written to deceive the enemy. Its contents were as follows: "Your Highness has been informed by the couriers sent you, of the taking of Reims, and

that the enemy afterwards retook that town. Count St. Priest with a great part of his troops has joined me at Berry-au-Bac. To-morrow I shall receive powerful reinforcements from the Netherlands; the parks with the provisions arrived to-day. As I have now bread for ten days, I have begun to put the army in motion."

On comparing the respective situations of the contending armies, we see that during the first days of March the Commanders-in-chief of the allied armies lost themselves in projects. The ailing Blücher did not stir from Laon, and Prince Schwarzenberg, who was likewise indisposed, was tardily drawing his troops towards Troyes. Between them, Napoleon halted for three days at Reims, to give some repose to his worn-out army: here reinforcements of ten thousand men reached him. He too had to form new plans for the campaign, which in the course of the preceding fortnight had assumed an entirely new aspect.

In the middle of February, when he marched from Troyes after Blücher, the Grand Army was in full retreat to Langres, but now it was again at the banks of the Seine and the Aube; and Blücher, whom he had hoped to beat, was not only unconquered, but triumphant at Laon, and might hourly appear in his rear. As Napoleon's chief aim was to save Paris, his choice of the army on which he should make an immediate attack, could not be long doubtful: the Grand Army was the nearer of the two to his capital. He therefore resolved to act against it, but not in front where he could have little hope of decided success on account of his inferiority in force; his plan was to fall upon the rear or the extremity of the right wing.

On the 5th March, Napoleon commenced his ad-

vance on the offensive from Reims to the Marne, and so on to the Aube, which he intended to cross either at Arcis or at Plancy, according to the information he expected to receive of the distribution of the Grand Army. On the following day in the morning, Major-General Kaissárof, who had been ordered in good time from Sezanne to La Fère Champenoise, reported that 20,000 of the enemy had arrived at the latter of these towns. Again at 5 o'clock in the afternoon he gave notice by a second report that the French advanced-guard had already reached Herbissé, distant seven versts from Arcis. Although this intelligence induced Prince Schwarzenberg to suspend his original intention, of drawing nearer to Blücher, and to think of concentrating the armies at Trannes, in order to keep on the line of his communications, yet it did not fully convince him that Napoleon was marching against him. He did not give entire credit to the reports of our partizan, considering them as exaggerations, and gave no order for accelerating the movements of the corps. "It cannot be," said he to General Toll, "that Napoleon is coming upon us with all his forces; Blücher will certainly not lose sight of him."

General Toll vainly attempted to convince him, that so experienced an officer as Kaissárof was deserving of his full confidence. The Field Marshal remained inflexible, and agreed with General Toll only in this, that as our partizan had only 1,200 Cossacks with him, it was absolutely necessary to send him a reinforcement that in the open country where he was acting, he might at least have a small reserve; four squadrons of Bavarian horse were therefore sent to him.

The Emperor, who was still at Troyes, was informed

by the frequent communications from General Toll to Prince Volkonsky, accompanied by the reports of Kaisárof in the original, of every thing that was passing at Prince Schwarzenberg's head-quarters, and also of the irresolution of the generals composing his council. His Majesty's presence was become indispensable in order to put an end to the wavering of the commander-in-chief at a moment when the dissemination of our troops over a hundred versts of country, from Provins to Brienne, gave the enemy a possibility of beating us in detail. It was necessary to rouse Prince Schwarzenberg to greater activity and to make him come to a resolution of some kind. The negligence and indifference at this time exhibited at head-quarters are incredible; for who, but eye-witnesses, could believe that when Napoleon was almost in view and was marching with the evident intention of falling upon the different corps one after another, the orders to their commanders were not always sent to them by expresses, *but often by post*; and that too in a country where horses were procured at the post-houses with difficulty, and were often not to be had at all.

At six o'clock in the evening, the Emperor, accompanied by Prince Volkonsky, arrived at Arcis from Troyes, and drove straight to the house occupied by Prince Schwarzenberg, who was confined to bed by a fit of the gout. Meeting General Toll in the antichamber, his Majesty said to him with evident displeasure:—"What are you about here? We may lose the whole army." "Have the goodness, your Majesty, personally to examine the scruples of these gentlemen," answered Toll. "I have done everything I could to show them the danger of our position. It is indeed a

great blessing your Majesty is come ; you will put all to rights." Addressing himself to Prince Schwarzenberg's Adjutant-General Count Radetsky and his quartermaster-general Baron Langenau, he put this question to them : " Gentlemen, how do you intend to act at this critical moment ? " They answered, " that it would be necessary to wait for further information from the advanced posts," to which the four squadrons of Bavarians had been sent.

On hearing this unsatisfactory answer, General Toll represented to the Emperor : " that every minute is now precious, and that no other means of warding off the coming blow was left, but to order all the corps to make a movement of concentration, and to stand between Troyes and Pongy, and Wrédé's corps to cross to the left bank of the Aube in the night and keep possession of Arcis and the bridge with all his forces." The Emperor having agreed to this suggestion, ordered General Toll to communicate it to Prince Schwarzenberg, who was in bed in the next room. The Field Marshal offered no opposition, and calling for Count Radetsky and Baron Langenau desired them to write corresponding orders to the commanders of corps : the Emperor sent off an express to Raiévsky to hasten by forced marches to Troyes. At this moment, seven o'clock in the evening, a Bavarian officer, who had been sent to the advanced posts, brought word that the enemy's advanced guard had actually reached Herbissé. Generals Radetsky and Langenau in preparing their new dispositions were not satisfied with General Toll's plan of making only one retrograde march, but with their ordinary caution added, that in addition to that on

the 7th, the corps should continue their retreat, on the 8th through Brienne to the position at Trannes.

The arrival of the Emperor at Arcis gave some degree of security to the army, but the danger was not yet over ; for Napoleon, after crossing at Arcis, might advance by the straight road to Troyes, almost in the centre of the Grand Army. To do so, he had only to make the most of his time by routing Wrédé who occupied Arcis, but instead, Napoleon left Herbissé on the 7th, and descending the course of the Aube, made a flank movement to Plancy in order to effect a junction with the corps of Macdonald, who was marching from Provins. His intention was to cross the river at Plancy and Mery along with that general, and then to fall upon the right flank of the Grand Army, which he still believed to be on the left bank of the Seine between Troyes, Nogent, Sens, and Pont-sur-Seine ; or at least, to cut off the corps lying on the Aube from those stationed along the Seine. There can be no doubt that this was the greatest blunder committed by Napoleon in the course of the campaign ; perhaps the loss of a day was never productive of more important consequences, for this mistaken movement greatly contributed to hasten the end of the war.

Prince Schwarzenberg ably availed himself of the useless march of Napoleon's army. As soon as he heard of it from Kaissárof he changed his plan, and instead of concentrating the troops between Troyes and Pongy, and retreating to Trannes, resolved to unite them in advance, between Arcis and Plancy, and to attack the enemy during his passage of the Aube. He thus passed from the defensive to the offensive, which

was the more advantageous for him, that Napoleon would be forced either to retreat or to receive battle, with a river flowing between marshy banks in his rear. This was the only remarkable manœuvre made by the Prince during the whole course of the campaign. As if reanimated by his interview with the Emperor, he threw off his former tardiness, and by thinking and acting with promptitude, annihilated the plans of his opponent, whose aim, as we have seen, was to beat his corps one by one.

On the 7th of March, the hostile armies were in the following positions. The advanced-guard of Count Wrédé occupied Arcis, and his corps lay at Chaudré : behind him were the reserves of Count Barclay at Brienne : the corps of the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, Count Giulay and Raiéfsky, were partly at Troyes and partly on their march to that town from Nogent, Mery, and Sens ; and the enemy having crossed the Aube at Plancy was drawing on towards Mery. Prince Schwarzenberg made his arrangements in such a manner that, in the forward movement, the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, besides his own troops, should take the command of the corps of Giulay and Raiéfsky, and then march with the whole in the direction of Plancy on St. Rémy and Premierfait. Count Wrédé, reinforced by the Russian reserves, was ordered to advance to Arcis from Chaudré. A powerful body of cavalry under the command of Count Frimont (since well-known by his Neapolitan campaign) connected the movements of the Prince of Wirtemberg and Count Wredé, and consequently was on the left wing of the latter. “ I am persuaded,” said Prince Schwarzenberg in his order to the commanders of corps, “ that

PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF AUSTIN

12th & 13th March 1814



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 versts

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the conviction of all of you is in harmony with mine, and that you will spare no exertion to make our enterprise as decisive as possible, in order to open our way to the attainment of the object of this sacred war."

The orders were sent off late in the evening of the 7th of March. At day-break of the following day on a cold but serene morning, the columns marched off their ground; the Prince of Wirtemberg and Giulay from Troyes on Plancy, and Raiéfsky by the Arcis road: the whole of the cavalry took the lead. At eight o'clock in the morning Count Wrédé formed in order of battle at Chaudré, and Count Barclay with the reserves at Onjon. In the mean time Napoleon having in person crossed the Aube at Plancy, had arrived at Mery, when he learned from the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, that there were almost no troops on the left bank of the Seine. This information, which was confirmed by patrols, convinced him that his flank movement from Herbissé so far from being of advantage, had merely occasioned a waste of time. For this reason he ordered the troops to return to Arcis, from whence he intended again to begin the offensive. Marshal Macdonald, who was on his march from Provins, but had not yet come up to Napoleon's main body was likewise ordered to follow it to Arcis, to which the French were now returning, from Mery and Plancy, by both banks of the Aube.

When they had crossed the little river Barbusse, and were drawing near to Arcis, Count Wrédé's advanced-guard received orders at ten o'clock to retire to a position from the town, which was then taken possession of by the French. While these movements

of the enemy were going on, they were not fully known to Prince Schwarzenberg, who, of course, made no change in his dispositions. The two hostile armies continued to approach Arcis, while some firing in the advanced-guards was now and then heard.

At eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the Emperor and the King of Prussia arrived on the heights of Menil-la-Comtesse, where the Russian guards were posted. The Emperor immediately dismounted, and walking backwards and forwards over the field with Count Barclay, alluded to the tardiness of the Austrian generals, and among other things said, "These gentlemen have given me many grey hairs;" and then talking of the enemy's movements, he added, "Napoleon will amuse us here with insignificant manœuvres, and with the main body of his forces will march on Brienne and beyond it, on our communications." These words, uttered in presence of us all, prove that the Emperor had divined the movements which Napoleon executed three days after, by marching from Vitry on St. Dizier.

A great part of the French troops having now come up from Plancy to Arcis, began to march out of the town with the view of turning the Grand Army, as had been resolved on by Napoleon at Reims, or at least of occupying the roads by which it was concentrating; for Napoleon was still convinced that it had been disseminated over a great extent of country, and had not had time to assemble. Some of his generals who had gone out to view the environs of Arcis, on seeing the heads of our columns at a distance, returned to the town and reported to Napoleon, that numerous forces were before it. To these reports he paid no attention,

affirming that it was only the rear-guard or the flying detachments of the Allies :—he was soon convinced of his mistake.

At one o'clock in the afternoon, Prince Schwarzenberg gave the signal for attack, by three discharges from a twelve-pounder. Kaissárof, who was on the extreme left, having been placed there to connect the movements of Count Wrédi's left wing with Raiefsky's corps, which was still on the march from Troyes to Plancy, opened the fight by an attack of cavalry. Having observed, that the artillery on the enemy's left wing was feebly guarded, he charged it with the Cossacks and took three guns. The cavalry, which was covering it, fled, but was stopped by Napoleon in person, who had at length rode out of the town in order to assure himself of the correctness of the reports he had received from his generals. Being now convinced of their accuracy, he promptly formed his troops in order of battle; his right wing leaning on Vilette, and his left on Torcy.

Count Wrédi began by sending forward the Bavarian horse somewhat to the left, and opened the cannonade; but his main object was to descend along the bank of the Aube, to force his way into Arcis, and, by getting possession of the bridge, to cut off the French troops, who were on the left bank, from those who had not yet crossed from the right. One of the battalions of his corps even got beyond Torcy, but instead of steadily advancing in column, it began to skirmish, when it was attacked and chased beyond Torcy. The enemy rushed into this village, which became the subject of a very severe combat. Napoleon and Count Wrédi, each sent fresh troops to the scene: every

effort to wrest the village out of the hands of the French proved fruitless.

On the left wing, the cavalry of Frimont and Kaisárof had more success. It forced back the enemy to the town, and caused such confusion in the French ranks, that Napoleon was obliged to send his escort to the attack and several times drew his sword. "Far from avoiding danger," says an eye-witness, "he seemed on the contrary to seek it. A grenade having fallen at his feet, he awaited the explosion and was soon lost in a cloud of dust and smoke. We thought he was killed; but he got up, threw himself on another horse, and again stood before the enemy's batteries. Death would have nothing to do with him."*

If our cavalry on the left wing had been reinforced by fresh troops, the attack on that side might have had the most decisive results, for the enemy's infantry at Torcy would have been cut off; but although the reserves were now ordered forward to reinforce the line of battle, they were still too far behind to take part in the action. To protect his left wing from renewed attacks of our cavalry, Napoleon placed seventy guns in front of it, which opened a heavy fire on their assailants, and at the same time, he sent all his infantry to defend the village of Torcy, on which Count Wrédé was continually renewing his fruitless attacks. To turn the enemy was impossible, for both his wings rested on the river, and on that account the hostile armies fought almost parallel to each other.

Prince Schwarzenberg delayed leading the reserves into action till he should hear what was doing in the

* Fain, Manuscrit de 1814, p. 191.

corps of the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, who was on the left bank of the Barbusse. When he was told that the Prince had no enemy to fight with, and that the French detachment which had occupied Mery, was on its march to Arcis, he desired the Prince to join him, and ordered the Russian reserves to engage. The grenadier corps was posted in the centre, with the exception of one of its battalions which had been sent to reinforce the Bavarians at Torcy; they were followed by the second and third divisions of cuirassiers. A few troops of horse-artillery were sent to the flanks; among others, the second of the Guards.* As the batteries were passing the Emperor at full speed, he called out to them to remember the battle of Leipsic, in which the Russian artillery had wrested victory out of the hands of Napoleon.

The sun was setting, evening was coming on, Arcis and Torcy were enveloped in flames, and the thunder of the artillery shook the ground, when the Emperor, along with the King of Prussia, following the reserves, descended the heights of Menil-la-Comtesse. Behind their Majesties came on the Cossacks of the Russian guards, and a brigade of cavalry of the Prussian guards, making the air resound with their trumpets and war-like songs, whose echoes mingled with the whiz of the enemy's balls, which passed over the heads of the monarchs.

The Russian horse-artillery having reached the left flank soon reduced the French batteries to silence. It now began to grow dark, and the fight raged only in Torcy. After being taken and retaken several times

* At this time there were only two troops of horse artillery of the Guards.

in the course of the day, this village finally remained in the hands of the enemy. About ten o'clock the battle was over, but the woody banks of the Aube now and then re-echoed to the roar of the cannonade which had not altogether ceased. The Emperor was now making arrangements with Prince Schwarzenberg for renewing the fight on the arrival of the Prince of Wirtemberg the next morning, when all at once a heavy fire of musketry and loud shouts were heard on the left. This was an attack of cavalry made by the French on the detachment of Kaissárof, who had the honour of beginning and ending the battle of Arcis. The attack was repulsed, and beyond that of a common alarm, produced no effect. The Emperor now retired to pass the night at Pongy. During the whole of the day His Majesty had been suffering from a fit of the ague, which obliged him to dismount during the battle and lie down on the ground.

Thus passed the day of the doubtful battle at Arcis. We call it so, because each of the hostile armies kept possession of almost the same positions they had occupied at mid-day. On both sides it was considered merely as the opening scene of the battle which all believed would take place on the following day, when Napoleon and Prince Schwarzenberg expected the arrival of a great part of their forces which had not reached Arcis on the 8th.; Macdonald with two corps to join the former, and the three corps of the Prince of Wirtemberg, the latter. Grounding his opinion on the obstinate defence of Arcis, and on the concurrent testimony of the prisoners, Prince Schwarzenberg was fully persuaded that Napoleon would attack him on the 9th, and therefore on returning late in the night to

Pongy sent round orders at one o'clock in the morning to prepare for action. The three corps of the Prince of Wirtemberg which had been sent to Plancy on the day before received an order to cross to the right bank of the Barbusse at day-break, and close up to Count Wrédé's left wing. Of these corps, Raiéfsky's was the nearest to the enemy, and on that account the prescribed movement was attended with difficulty, as he had to cross the Barbusse at the hamlet of Nozé in sight of the French. Count Pahlen who led Raiéfsky's advanced-guard, skilfully taking advantage of a small eminence, placed a battery on it, and opened a fire, under cover of which, he promptly formed the cavalry in line. The whole infantry then crossed after it and took up the appointed ground.

At six o'clock in the morning of the 9th of March the Grand Army stood in order of battle: Count Wrédé was, as before, at Chaudré; the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg at the hamlet of Menil; Count Giulay to his left: and Raiéfsky on the left wing at Nozé. The grenadiers, cuirassiers, and the guards were in the second line, the greater part of them behind Menil-la-comtesse, Kaissárof, and Soslávin were observing both banks of the Barbusse, and Count Ojaroófsky, with the light division of the cavalry of the guard, crossed to the right bank of the Aube to keep an eye over the motions of the enemy on that side. Napoleon concentrated his army around Arcis in the same positions it had occupied the day before, and Macdonald's corps which had come up was still left on the opposite side of the river; probably with the intention of marching through Brienne to attack the Grand Army on its retreat; for Napoleon was convinced that

at day-break he should witness its retreat across the Aube at Lesmont.

The rays of the rising sun glancing on the arms of a numerous host showed Napoleon how widely he had erred in his calculations. Here was a curious spectacle which rendered this morning peculiarly remarkable. Two hostile armies mutually animated with bitter feelings of long date, stood gazing at each other at a very short distance, without stirring from the spot they occupied: each waiting till the other should begin the attack. On both sides, more than 150,000 men were under arms; the slow matches were burning at the batteries placed in front of the armies, while over the field there reigned a perfect stillness uninterrupted even by the report of a single gun. Hour after hour passed away, yet neither Napoleon nor Schwarzenberg would give the word to fall on. Some of the Prince's confidants among the generals counselled him to retire; the most experienced of Napoleon's marshals advised him to do the same; yet both, as if convinced that the hour destined to decide the campaign was come, delayed, consulted and instead of drawing the sword and throwing away the scabbard, submitted to the rules of cold calculation on an occasion which might win a victory or avert a defeat. It is easy to imagine with what impatience the Emperor Alexander whom illness detained at Pongy longed to know how this hesitation was to end. Hourly expresses sent to the field of battle brought him word of what was going on, and at twelve o'clock reported that in all probability Napoleon would soon begin the attack, as the troops which had been left on the other side of the Aube were now seen crossing to the left bank. It thus seemed beyond a doubt that the

field of Arcis was again to witness a bloody fight ; but it fell out otherwise.

Half an hour had not passed, when a certain degree of agitation became visible in the enemy's army. The troops of the second line began to draw off in deep columns from the position to Arcis, and passing the river by the bridge, kept marching along the opposite bank of the Aube. It was plain that Napoleon did not find it for his advantage to fight on this ground. In order to retreat, he did not even wait till the dusk of the evening, but executed about mid-day and under the eyes of the Grand Army, a movement on which no other general but himself would have ventured. As soon as Prince Schwarzenberg was certain that the enemy was retiring, he sent for the commanders of corps, and verbally gave them the following order :— Count Wrédé, as standing nearest to the Aube, immediately to cross that river at Lesmont and follow the enemy on his flank ; the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg with the other three corps, viz. his Highness's, Raiéfsky's and Count Giulay's, to attack Arcis and the enemy's rear-guard, and to begin the attack on a signal to be given by the Field Marshal.

Three guns having been fired as the signal, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the troops were put in motion preceded by a hundred pieces of cannon, which opened their fire at the same instant. Raiéfsky got first engaged ; Count Pahlen charged the enemy's cavalry, breaking it, and taking three guns. The artillery of the other corps moved on in line with Raiéfsky, and formed round the enemy a continuous chain of batteries which kept up an incessant cannonade. The French being compelled to retire nearer the town, took

up a good position in front of it, which Count Pahlen attacked on the extremity of their right wing, and Raiéf-sky in front. The enemy was then forced to abandon it and to retreat into the town. The French artillery crossed the Aube and cannonaded our troops from the opposite bank : the cavalry followed it by crossing at the ford. Their infantry still attempted to hold out in the town, but the corps of Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg, having rushed into it at the enemy's heels, a heavy fire was kept up in the streets. By this time the enemy had succeeded in destroying the bridge by which the chief part of their rear-guard had already crossed, but many were drowned in their attempt to swim across. In order to prevent the bridge from being repaired, the enemy continued to keep up a heavy fire from the opposite bank to a late hour in the night.

Thus ended the struggle at Arcis which was so far important, that Napoleon finding the Grand Army concentrated, failed in his plan of beating it in detail, and was obliged to choose a new line of operations. The allied troops under arms amounted to 90,000 men, and the French to 50,000. Our only trophies were the six guns captured by Count Pahlen and Kaissárof. The combat at Arcis is further memorable as having been the last meeting of Alexander with Napoleon, and as having forced the latter to abandon the field of battle to his rival, who, ten days after it, put an end to the blood-stained career of the mighty conqueror.

CHAPTER X.

Success of Count Ojaroffsky. — Napoleon marches to St. Dizier. — Blücher attacks Marmont at Berry-au-Bac. — General Chernisheff pursues Marmont to Chateau Thierry. — Blücher proceeds to Chalons. — Movement of the Allied Army. — Napoleon crosses the Marne. — Vitry refuses to surrender. — Interception of important despatches by the Allies. — Junction of the Allied Armies. — Resolution of the Emperor Alexander to march to Paris. — Close of the Congress at Châtillon. — Public declaration issued by the Allies.

THREE roads lead from Arcis to the north : one through Sezanne to Paris, another to Chalons, and a third to Vitry. It was thought that Napoleon would choose one or other of the two first as neither would lead him away from Paris. This conclusion proved a mistaken one. Leaving a powerful rear-guard opposite to Arcis, and crowning the right bank of the Aube with batteries, he retired in the direction of Vitry. At the first glance this movement was thought to be a manœuvre to blind the Allies to his ulterior plans, for nobody could think it possible that he would resolve to leave without defence Paris, the centre of his power, and the possession of which was one of the necessary conditions of his political existence. Nevertheless the reports of the partizans affirmed that he had actually marched to the right. One Cossack officer, who had been out with a

patrol, was so confounded on seeing the French in full march for Vitry, that in his report he said, "the enemy is retreating not on Paris, but on Moscow." Although Prince Schwarzenberg doubted the accuracy of these reports, yet desiring in all events to keep near the enemy, he led his army across the Aube at Chaudré on the day after the battle at Arcis. He posted it between Corbeil and Dampierre, that he might the more easily march to Vitry, or turn to whatever point circumstances might require. The single corps of Count Giulay was left at Arcis to keep the bridge.

In the night of the 10th, the French rear-guard retreated from the neighbourhood of Arcis to Sommepy, where it was attacked by Count Ojaroffsky. Having on the preceding evening received information from his patrols that artillery was in march on the road to Vitry, he sent the hulans of the guards to look out for it, and soon learned that the French had halted for the night at the village of Sommepy. At day-break the next day he ordered the same regiment to attack the enemy. One squadron broke the cavalry which had formed to cover the guns, but was finally repulsed. Another shared the same fate; but a third, commanded by Captain Strandman, had better fortune. It broke the enemy's cavalry and forcing it off the ground, captured twenty-three guns, but succeeded in bringing off only fourteen, the enemy coming up in time to save the rest. In addition to this capture, 400 prisoners were taken, and a courier intercepted with dispatches which were brought to the Emperor's head-quarters at Pougy.

From these despatches we learned that the British troops had entered Bordeaux, and what was of incom-

parably greater importance, received ample confirmation of the reports of Napoleon having marched to Vitry with the intention of leading his troops through St. Dizier and Joinville, and falling upon the communications of the Grand Army. Napoleon's march with his guard to Vitry was further confirmed by a Frenchwoman taken near the enemy's camp by Captain Strandman. She declared that she had seen the Emperor on the road to that town. Being taken to head-quarters she received a gratification of a hundred ducats.

Napoleon's movement to St Dizier, the propriety of which is still the subject of controversy, was simply the consequence of the difficulty of his position. Being pressed on different sides, he had not a free choice of lines of operation. He could neither remain where he was, nor march against either of the allied armies, both being superior to him in force. The combats at Laon and Arcis convinced him that he was not a match for either of them. Still less could he hope for victory in the event of their junction which he was not in a situation to hinder. He reckoned that Blücher had in all probability broken up from Laon, and that having driven off Marmont and Mortier who were watching him, he might be daily expected to fall upon his rear, while the Grand Army was arrayed in his front. Napoleon had therefore only the choice—either to march on Paris, or on the rear of his opponents. He was prevented from taking the former by political considerations: for if he had retreated to Paris from Arcis, he must inevitably have drawn the Allies after him, and have thus exposed to the eyes of all France his inability to contend with them. He was powerful in the opinion of the people as long as he kept at a distance

from Paris, because he might there boldly write of his imaginary success, and continue to indite rhapsodies about his lucky planet, which from the extraordinary levity of the French people, were sure to find easy credence. If on the contrary, the war were removed to the immediate neighbourhood of the capital itself, the French could not fail to see with their own eyes that he was reduced to extremity. This he tried by every means to avoid, in order to keep the spirits of the people from sinking, and to prevent his enemies from exciting an insurrection against his authority. He well knew the characteristic of his subjects to be insolence in prosperity and pusillanimity in adversity. By combining all these circumstances, it is not difficult to see that Napoleon could only march on St. Dizier and Joinville ; for although this movement became the immediate cause of the termination of the war and of his fall, it was still the only means, if not of gaining a victory, at least of drawing out the campaign and of gaining time, in the course of which some change in his favour might possibly take place.

Napoleon believed that while he was acting on the communications of the Allies, the exasperated inhabitants of a country which had been ruined by a wasting campaign of three months, would rise *en masse* on his appearance, and that in the desperation of the people, he should find the means of defence and even of attack. The garrisons too on the Rhine, Saone and Moselle would join him and materially augment the number of his troops, which were now reduced to 40,000 men. To this may be added that he was not ignorant that the impression of his former victories was not effaced from the imaginations of some of the Allies,

and that his name was even still a terror to them. And thus grounding his hope of success in this enterprise even on the moral influence it was likely to have over the Allies, he reckoned, that as soon as they knew him to be in their rear, they would not venture on any bold operation, but would march after him ; in other words, that they would do the very thing he wanted them to do. If any thing were needed to prove that he believed himself to be still in possession of the talisman by which he had so often paralysed, as it were, the moral energies of some of his opponents, it will suffice to quote his own words, spoken by him at Porto-Ferrajo to the Austrian General Köller, who had accompanied him to the Isle of Elba : “I marched on St. Dizier,” said he, “because twenty experiments had convinced me, that I had only to send a few hussars on your line of communication in order to spread dismay among you. On this occasion I stood on it with my whole army, but you never troubled your heads about me ; ’twas because the devil was in you.”

On receiving the intercepted dispatches, the Emperor sent for Prince Schwarzenberg, who had rode out in the morning to visit the troops in the advance, and in order personally to observe what was going on in that quarter. Between two and three o’clock the Prince arrived at Pougy and went straight to His Majesty almost at the same time with the King of Prussia. The Sovereigns and the Commander-in-chief now resolved to march to Chalons, and to join Blücher, who according to intelligence furnished the day before by Baron Tettenborn, had at length moved from Laon, and was marching in the direction of Reims. This town was already occupied by Cher-

nisheff whose advanced-guard was in communication with Tettenborn's detachment between Reims and Chalons.

In order to give some notion of the movements of the Silesian army, we must return to it for a moment, and for the last time speak of it separately till its junction with the Grand Army. It was not till the tenth day of Blücher's stay at Laon, that he knew for certain of Napoleon having marched to the Marne, and that he set out in pursuit of him. This was on the 7th March, on the eve of the battle of Arcis. On leaving Laon he thus disposed of his six corps: Bülow was detached to Soissons, York and Kleist to Château Thierry, and with the three Russian corps of Count Langeron, Sacken and Wintzengerode, the Field-Marshal marched through Reims on Chalons. On his way he intended to beat Marmont, who was lying at Berry-au-Bac on the left bank of the Aisne to watch the Silesian army. To carry his intention into execution, Blücher marched straight to Berry-au-Bac, ordering Chernisheff to cross the Aisne higher up, and to get in Marmont's rear while he himself attacked him in front. General Chernisheff safely effected his passage and circuit in a country in full insurrection, and in which the tocsin was every where calling the people to arms. He attacked Marmont and routed the first troops he fell in with, at the very moment Blücher arrived at Berry-au-Bac, and was preparing to cross the Aisne. To escape from danger Marmont blew up the bridge, and thus kept our corps on the opposite bank of the river. Pursued by General Chernisheff, he retreated to Château Thierry, where he joined Mortier. Blücher continued his march to Chalons

where he arrived on the 11th March, that is, on the very day the Emperor, the King of Prussia and Prince Schwarzenberg had resolved to march to that town.

Conformably to the arrangement of their Majesties, the Grand Army was instantly to break up from the environs of Dampierre and Corbeil, and march during the whole night, and, after being joined by Blücher, to act in the rear of the enemy. With respect to the line of communication by Chaumont and Langres, it was resolved, for a time at least, to abandon it, and to order the parks, artillery, and troops to return to Basle: a new line of communication was to be chosen, either through the Netherlands or across the lower Rhine. And thus paying no regard to our line of communications, towards which Napoleon was now hurrying, the Grand Army, in his rear between him and Paris, and in the midst of a general insurrection of the enraged inhabitants of the country, was marching, so to speak, to shake hands with that of Blücher. The strictest criticism must be silent on contemplating this well-planned enterprise, which, even down to the present day, has never been fully appreciated. It was the source of an uninterrupted series of fortunate events closely following each other, and which, in seven days, brought us to Paris, the aim and end of a complicated and difficult campaign, in which success and failure had in frequent alternation elevated and depressed our hopes.

An order was instantly given for the corps to be put in motion and to march all night in the direction of Sommepey, so as, at day-break on the 12th, to concentrate at Vessigneul, between Vitry and Ferè Champenoise. Some officers were sent by the road through

Chaumont to Basle, in order to anticipate the enemy's march on our line of communications, by taking the necessary measures of precaution. Count Araktchéiéff's aide-de-camp, Kleinmichel, was dispatched to give information of Napoleon's movements to the Grand Dukes, Nicholas and Michael. Their Imperial Highnesses had quitted St. Petersburg on the 5th February, and arrived at Frankfort on the 28th. Having crossed the Rhine at Basle, they had reached Vesoul, where they were unexpectedly met by Captain Kleinmichel, with a verbal report of the route being intercepted. It is not difficult to imagine the chagrin which this disagreeable news caused to their Highnesses. It was the more severely felt that the disappointment was owing to the slow rate of travelling of General Count Lambsdorf, under whose absolute authority they were placed. Had they arrived but two days sooner, they would have been present at the battles of La Ferè Champenoise and Paris, and have taken part in the triumphant entry into the French capital. They were now obliged, with heavy hearts, to retrace their steps from Vesoul to Basle, where they remained till the close of the campaign.

At this time Prince Schwarzenberg's aide-de-camp, Count Paar, was sent from Pougy to the Emperor Francis, who was at Bar-sur-Seine; but His Majesty had on the same day set out for Dijon, whither he was followed by the diplomatic body, which had remained behind the armies from the time they had marched to Arcis. The temporary removal of these gentlemen from the theatre of war was a most fortunate circumstance; for, by their continual meddling, they had in many respects retarded the march of the campaign and

proved the cause of many a failure. From the day the Rhine was crossed, they had been continually preaching up the necessity of making peace and presenting discordant opinions on the nature of its terms, and of the final territorial arrangements of the different states. On these pretexts they tried to conceal the fear with which Napoleon had never ceased to inspire them. Availing themselves of their influence over certain cabinets, they even arrogated to themselves the right of judging of military operations, often rendering it necessary to enter into discussion with them in order to show the futility of their short-sighted views. In these idle disputes with them much precious time was spent, which might otherwise have been exclusively devoted to the war. How injurious to the good cause had been the presence of the diplomatic body at the head-quarters of the army was put beyond a doubt by the fact, that as soon as they had set out for Dijon, and we had thus got fairly rid of them, the campaign instantly took a new turn, and was finished within a week.

While the army was breaking up from the camp at Corbeil and Dampierre, and the Emperor was preparing to follow the troops on their night-march, Napoleon crossed over to the right bank of the Marne at Flignicourt, near the town of Vitry, which was occupied by the Russian troops. Three times he called on the garrison to surrender, threatening the town with an assault, and even brought up his batteries and opened a cannonade; but the fortress held out. Anxious not to lose time, he did not, however, carry his threats into execution, and renouncing further attempts on Vitry, continued his march. The hope of success,

which he still clung to, was no longer shared by his army. The French officers being necessarily unacquainted with the projects of their leader, kept saying to each other on the march to St. Dizier, "Whither are we going? What will become of us? If he is destined to fall, are we to perish with him?" From these words, which are cited by one who heard them,* it is plain that the idea of Napoleon's fall had begun to be familiar to the mind of the French army. A circumstance which tended much to strengthen it, was the arrival of Caulaincourt, who, on the very day of Napoleon's passage of the Marne, returned from Châtillon to head-quarters, with the news of the close of the Congress, and consequently of the negotiations for peace.

On the 11th March, at eight o'clock in the evening, the Emperor left Pougy, and passing through the villages of Véricourt and Coclois, crossed the Aube by a pontoon bridge at Nogent, and at one o'clock in the morning reached Dampierre, where he halted. His Majesty travelled in a calash, as he was still suffering from the ague, and the road was lighted with torches. At Dampierre despatches were arrived which had been intercepted by Generals Chernisheff and Tettenborn. On being opened in presence of Princes Schwarzenberg and Volkonsky and Count Nesselrode, two of them were found to be of the greatest importance. The first contained a report from the minister of police, Savary, on the state of France. It has unfortunately been lost; but those who read it said, that it painted in the deepest colours the wretched state of France, and her inability to continue the war, and that it con-

* Fain, Manuscrit de 1814.

tributed much to the resolution of marching on Paris, adopted a few hours afterwards. In the second despatch was the following letter written with Napoleon's own hand to his consort: "My love, — I have been all these days constantly on horseback. On the 20th I took Arcis on the Aube. The same evening the enemy attacked me near that town, but I beat them: they had four thousand men killed. The next day the enemy marched in the direction of Brienne and Barsur-Aube, and I resolved, in order to draw them away from Paris, to lead my army to the Marne, and to approach the fortresses. This evening I shall be at St. Dizier. Farewell, my love, — give a kiss to our son."

After this letter was read Prince Volkonsky proposed that after uniting with Blücher a strong corps should be sent after Napoleon, and that we should take the nearest road to Paris with the united armies. "We shall get there," said he, "in five days, and have Paris in our hands before Napoleon can know any thing about it." Prince Schwarzenberg thought this idea too bold, and answered that he would not venture on such an enterprise without the consent of the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia.

Napoleon's letter had been intercepted by General Tettenborn, who sent a copy of it to the Emperor's head-quarters and the original to that of the army of Silesia. Blücher immediately sent it to the French advanced posts to be forwarded to Maria Louisa, and at the same time, with his own hand added a few lines to her Majesty, promising regularly to forward to her all Napoleon's letters, for which, he added, "there was no other road but through the army of Silesia."

It occasionally happens in time of war that whole weeks pass away, during which the leaders, either from irresolution or being occupied with preparatory arrangements, or for some reason or other, do nothing ; but to make up for the lost time, there occur days which, notwithstanding their shortness, are remarkable for events which rapidly follow each other. In the number of such is to be reckoned the 12th of March and the following days which we have now reached.

Napoleon's letter to the Empress and the report of his minister of police exposed in all its nakedness the true situation of France and the real intentions of Napoleon. It had hardly been read over, when an express arrived in the night from Count Pahlen with the intelligence of his having, on the road from Arcis to Chalons, fallen in with the advanced troops of General Chernisheff, that is, with Blücher's advanced-guard. Count Pahlen further reported that the army of Silesia was at Reims and Epernay, that Chalons was occupied by it, and that Count Wintzengerode was at Vitry. In this way the heads of the columns of the two armies met in the rear of the French. The junction having taken place sooner than had been reckoned on the night before at Pougy, the route of march to Chalons was immediately changed. All the columns, together with Wintzengerode's corps, were ordered to incline to the fortress of Vitry, which, as we learned also on the same night, had not surrendered to the enemy. It was now Prince Schwarzenberg's intention to attack, in the neighbourhood of Vitry, the French troops which were still on the left bank of the Marne.

At two o'clock in the morning the Emperor left Dampierre for Sommepy, where he made a second

halt. The intercepted letters were here laid before his Majesty by Prince Schwarzenberg, who on retiring told Prince Volkonsky that the Emperor retained his former opinion, which was to unite with Blücher at Vitry, and following Napoleon with the combined armies, attack him wherever they should find him. He then mounted his horse and rode off. Prince Volkonsky immediately went to his Majesty and stated his opinion that it would be more advantageous to take the road to Paris than to follow the enemy. After he had explained his ideas in detail, the Emperor desired him to call in Count Barclay and Generals Diebitch and Toll, who all happened to be at hand, and when they entered, his Majesty spoke to them as follows:—"After the junction of the two armies we shall have to choose one of two plans: to follow Napoleon and attack him with greatly superior forces; or, concealing our movements from him, to march straight to Paris. What is your idea, gentlemen?" Turning to Count Barclay, his Majesty asked him his opinion. The Count looking at the map, said "he thought it would be best to follow Napoleon and attack him." At first all agreed with him, except General Diebitch, who proposed that while the united armies were engaged in following Napoleon, General Bülow, who was lying at Soissons, should make a dash at Paris. To this Prince Volkonsky replied as follows:—"It is well known that there are in Paris forty thousand national guards and fragments of various regiments, and that in addition to these, at a short distance from the capital are the two corps of Marmont and Mortier. All these troops together form a total of ninety thousand men, consequently we cannot expect that Bülow with his thirty thousand men could under-

take any thing of importance : on the contrary, he would expose himself to danger by attacking an enemy so greatly superior to him in numbers. I may add, that if we follow Napoleon, we must leave a powerful rear-guard to repulse the attack of these two marshals. Taking these circumstances into consideration, I am inclined to think that it would be the best plan first to unite with the Silesian army, and then to detach against Napoleon a numerous body of cavalry and some regiments of infantry, with instructions everywhere to prepare accommodation for the Emperor, that it may be believed we are following with the whole army. We ought then to march straight to Paris through Ferè-Champenoise, and Blücher through Etoges, keeping up an uninterrupted communication between the two armies. Following this route, we must attack Marshals Marmont and Mortier wherever we meet them. We shall beat them, because we are stronger than they, and each day will place two marches between us and Napoleon.”

This opinion being approved of by the Emperor, General Diebitch said : — “ If it is your Majesty’s intention to re-establish the Bourbons, it would certainly be better for both armies to march on Paris.” “ We are not now talking of the Bourbons,” replied his Majesty, “ but of pulling down Napoleon.” It was then calculated how many days it would take to reach Paris, when it was found, that after taking possession of the capital, there would be time enough to put an end to Napoleon’s power there, and to take the necessary measures for meeting him if he should attempt to approach it. When the council of war broke up, the Emperor, wishing to communicate his

plans to the King of Prussia and Prince Schwarzenberg, called for his horse and rode off towards Vitry. At the sixth or seventh verst, his Majesty met the King and the Field-Marshal, whom he requested to dismount, and then desired General Toll to give them the map, which they unrolled on the ground. This was about eleven o'clock on a beautiful spring morning, on a height within sight of Vitry, whither the troops were seen marching from every side, over meadows and corn-fields, which were just beginning to look green. The Emperor, leaning over the map, explained Prince Volkonsky's opinion, which was now his own. The King and the Prince at once approved of it, and gladly assented to the proposed march. Thus it was, that exactly one year and nine months after Napoleon's irruption into Russia, Alexander pointed out the road to Paris,—a road which our descendants should never forget.

Although it was not fitting to make public the resolution of the monarchs to march to Paris, it was impossible to keep it long a secret. In order fully to conceive the enthusiasm with which it was hailed, the reader must place himself in the position of those who experienced all the ups and downs of the ever-memorable year, 1812,—who witnessed the desolation of Russia, the evacuation of Moscow, the profanation of our temples,—heard the thunder of Borodino and Leipsic, and who, after experiencing so many alternations of fortune, were now filled with a presentiment that the end of their labours, and of bloodshed, was at hand, and that the day of universal peace had begun to dawn. Having brought over the King of Prussia and Prince Schwarzenberg to his opinion, the Emperor set off for

Vitry, where he passed the remainder of the day in making arrangements for the intended march. Before entering the town he met the Cossack regiments of General Chernisheff's advanced-guard, and consequently ascertained in person that the junction of the two armies was effected. The Emperor gazed with pleasure on this detachment, which, during the two past campaigns, had equally distinguished itself by valour and discipline. He entered into conversation with General Chernisheff, who had requested permission to communicate something to his Majesty. After listening to his General Aide-de-camp, who was enlarging on the necessity of marching on Paris, the Emperor said to him with a smile, "Ask Prince Volkonsky what resolution we came to only half an hour ago."

In the meantime, the corps of the Grand Army took up their quarters in the environs of Vitry, Count Wrédé's at Maisons, Raiéfsky's at Drouilly, the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg's at Blasy, and Count Barclay with the reserves at Courdemanger; Count Guilay alone remaining at Arcis. The enemy's rear-guard was no longer on the left bank of the Marne; it had crossed at Flignicourt, followed and watched by a detachment of the garrison of Vitry.

At Vitry the following arrangements were made for putting the army in motion: the Grand Army was ordered to march on the following morning, the 13th March, and, without halting, to advance along the high-road, through Ferè Champenoise to Meaux, there to be joined by the Silesian army on the 16th, the latter being ordered to march thither from Chalons and Château-Thierry. In this way the Grand Army

formed the left, and the army of Silesia, the right column. On effecting their junction at Meaux, they were to advance on the 17th to Paris. In order to conceal this movement from Napoleon, it was agreed, in conformity with the resolution adopted at Sommepey, to send after the French army a numerous corps of cavalry, under the command of Baron Wintzengerode.

The details of the commission entrusted to Wintzengerode, are unfolded in the following instructions written with the hand of His Imperial Majesty:—
“Napoleon has crossed the Marne with his whole forces, and is marching through St. Dizier on Joinville and Vignory, with the intention of drawing the garrisons from the fortresses to his army and leading us away from Paris. Instead of following the enemy, the Grand Army, along with that of Silesia, will march straight on the capital. With the whole of the cavalry under your command, and the horse-artillery, you will immediately cross the Marne to Vitry and follow the enemy by St. Dizier. You will detach General Chernisheff with a numerous body of Cossacks to the right towards Montierender to observe the country between the Marne and the Aube, and General Tettenborn to the left, towards Metz, to ascertain whether the enemy is making any movement in the direction of that fortress. Your grand object must be to conceal the march of our armies from the enemy, and to give us accurate information of the direction of that of Napoleon.”

In order more completely to deceive the enemy, Baron Wintzengerode received orders every where to make preparations for receiving the Emperor, as if

His Majesty were following the cavalry with the army. Kaissárof and Soslávin received the following commissions:—the former instantly to march to Arcis for a twofold purpose; in the first place, to keep up our communications with the army of the south; and, in the second, to send parties to Brienne and Montierender, and to keep in communication with Chernisheff, whom the Emperor had personally ordered to watch with all diligence the movements of Napoleon, and to communicate them to His Majesty. Soslávin was removed to Provins to watch the country between Montmirail and Montereau, and, if possible, that between Fontainebleau and Nemours. From this distribution of the flying detachments, it may be seen, that by occupying the roads leading to those places whither Napoleon was leading his army, they deprived him of the means of communicating with Paris.

In addition to these dispositions, Prince Volkonsky communicated orders directly from His Imperial Majesty to the different Russian corps attached to the army of Silesia, marking out their line of march and strictly enjoining “that on the advance the troops should observe all military precautions, and that they should not march otherwise than in fighting order, the battalions being always in columns of attack.” Cautions of this nature can never be superfluous. Thanks to them, in this campaign, our troops were never attacked unprepared, and they became so familiar with the service of the advanced posts, that the foreign Generals of the allied armies, on being sent with detachments, commonly requested a certain proportion of Russian light cavalry to be employed as patrols and in the advanced lines. Hardly a movement was made in

the Grand Army at the head of which was not to be seen Count Pahlen's cavalry, which even passed from under the command of one General to that of another.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the corps of General Wintzengerode consisting of 8,000 hussars, hulans and Cossacks, and 46 guns of the horse-artillery, entered Vitry. These troops marched from thence in the direction of St. Dizier, and in the evening at Tieblemont overtook the enemy's rear-guard, with which they had a slight skirmish. When this corps had quitted Vitry all became quiet in the town in which the head-quarters of the Emperor alone remained. In a short time the sky was illuminated by the countless fires of the bivouacs along the banks of the Marne, where our troops were allowed a short time for repose, as some of them were to march on the following morning at day-break.

When the march-routes were being drawn out in order to be sent round on this day along with the orders, a coincidence was observed which we cannot pass over in silence. The march-routes indicating the roads to Paris were written by the same officers of the staff who, in the year 1812, had framed those for our army when it abandoned Moscow and marched out of it by the Riazan road. We now put down on the march-routes, Etoges, Epernay, Fère Champenoise, Vertus, and other names of French towns; when near the Poklón hills, we had put down those of Bogoródsk, Kassímof, Sérpukof, and Podólsk. It seemed as if a whole age of events separated the two epochs, while in reality there was only a year and a half between them.

Napoleon was now withdrawing farther and farther from his capital; indeed he left it altogether without

defence by sending orders to Marmont and Mortier, who were watching the Silesian army, to march through Vitry and to close up to him. He himself advanced by forced marches to St. Dizier from whence he sent detachments of cavalry to Bar-sur-Aube and Chaumont. Their unexpected appearance on the line of our communications at first produced an universal alarm, but it was of no other advantage to the enemy. The French had certainly good reason to think that on our line of communications they should capture our hospitals, treasure, parks of artillery, and make prisoners of the escorts, or disperse them. Here, however, their expectations were baulked; for with the exception of a pontoon bridge, some couriers, and ten carts, not a thing fell into their hands, although, according to their usual custom, they have not failed to publish that on this occasion, they captured a prodigious quantity of provisions and ammunition, and made many prisoners. The cause of their failure was the extraordinary activity of the General-Police-Master Ertel.

When the armies marched to Chalons after the combats at Arcis, General Ertel was sent to Bar-sur-Aube. He collected the wounded, regimental baggage, parks, and the money-chest in which there were millions, sent back the moveable magazine, which was already on the way to St. Dizier, and retired with the whole to Chaumont, where the Emperor's baggage joined him. Having established order among the innumerable carts, (in one division only of the Commissariat there were upwards of a thousand) and properly posted the convoy consisting of one regiment of infantry, one of hulans, and two of Cossacks, he now retreated along with them towards Langres, and Vesoul.

Notwithstanding the Austrian commandants of the towns lying on his way refused to assist him with supplies, he not only reached Altkirch in safety, but at that place, in the course of a few days, formed out of the wounded a detachment of six thousand men to which he joined all the parties he fell in with on our line of communication. He also sent orders to the Russian reserves which were traversing Germany, to hasten forward to Altkirch. Infantry, cavalry and artillery kept daily arriving at this dépôt, and their numbers in a short time became so considerable, that he was able to keep down insurrection in a country ready to rise in arms, which the inhabitants were every where called on to do by the Generals purposely sent to Chaumont and Bar-sur-Aube to assure them that Napoleon was pursuing us. On the subject of his arrangements General Ertel made his reports to Count Barclay in the Lettish language, being pretty sure that if they should happen to be intercepted, not one of the French could make out what he had written.

Not wishing to break the thread of our relation of military operations, we alluded but cursorily to Caulaincourt's return from Châtillon to Napoleon's headquarters, and to the closing of the congress, which was preceded by the following circumstances. To the rough draft of the treaty which had been communicated to Caulaincourt he did not present an answer within the prescribed term of ten days, which expired on the 26th of February. On that day, instead of an answer, he read to the congress some observations on the project. In substance and style they resembled those pompous discourses which used to be delivered in the French senate in praise of Napoleon's victories, and to prove

that his paramount authority in political affairs and his conquests were indispensable to the welfare of Europe and to the human race. Without touching the substance of the terms of the peace, he enlarged vaguely on the past and present condition of the European states and of the future political system. Having heard him out, the Ministers told him that his observations were fruitlessly leading them away from the end for which they had assembled, and that they had neither the wish nor the right to enter into historical discussions. Caulaincourt then produced another paper which he called a *note verbale*, which contained nothing but the acceptance by the French government of some of the articles of the treaty of peace, and of course could not be considered as an answer.

At the following meeting he was asked whether he intended to sign the peace on the terms offered, or to present a definite answer. Caulaincourt again entered into long political reasonings, but he was told that he must speak to the question. He then requested to be allowed to send a courier for instructions : it was answered that the congress would be considered as closed if he did not immediately present the answer required of him. Caulaincourt, greatly agitated, as appeared by a change in his voice, said, " that on the following day he would present a counter-project : " the 3rd of March was fixed for receiving it. With quivering lips and trembling hands, he then read a treaty of peace consisting of thirty articles. The majority of them differed materially from what the Allies had demanded of Napoleon. Perceiving from Caulaincourt's words that the court of the Tuilleries wished merely to gain time, the plenipotentiaries declared the congress to be closed.

Count Stadion then sent Caulaincourt a passport to enable him to reach the French army without hindrance. On receiving it he requested Count Razumoffsky to give him an escort of Cossacks, accompanied by whom he set off to rejoin Napoleon.

Thus ended the Congress, which had opened and continued its sittings in the midst of the warlike hurricanes which were raging around it. It must not be supposed that it ever had the fate of peace and war in its hands. The second-rate ministers who composed it were mere instruments to execute the orders sent them from the head-quarters of the armies. Peace depended not on them, but on success or failure in the battle field.

We have mentioned in the proper place that during the Emperor's stay at Langres when the question was discussed whether the Allies should enter into negotiations with Napoleon, it was resolved to issue a public declaration if they should not be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. To give effect to this resolution, the Congress being now at end, the following manifest was published at head-quarters, in which the march of the negotiations and their failure are minutely set forth :

“ The Allied Powers consider it to be a duty which they owe to themselves, to their subjects, and to France, at the moment the conferences at Châtillon have been broken off, to make public the motives which led them to enter into negotiations with the French government, and the causes of their failure.

“ Military events, to which it is difficult to find a parallel in history, overthrew, in the month of October last, the monstrous edifice called the French Empire ; a political structure which had been founded on the

ruins of once independent and happy states, enlarged by countries torn from ancient monarchies, and upheld at the expense of the blood, property, and prosperity of a whole generation. Victory having brought the Allied Monarchs to the Rhine, they consider it as their duty again to lay open to the eyes of Europe the principles which formed the basis of their union, and to declare their wishes and intentions. Having no views whatever of ambition or of conquest, but animated with the sole wish to see Europe re-established according to the rule of a fair proportion of power among the states, and resolved not to lay down their arms till they should have obtained the noble object of their efforts, they showed the firmness of their purpose by a public act, and immediately made a declaration to the enemy's government in conformity with their unchangeable determination.

“ The French Government availed itself of the explicit declaration of the Allied Courts to express its inclination for peace. It was indeed necessary to pretend this desire, in order to justify to the people the new sacrifices which were continually demanded from them. In the meantime everything proved to the allied cabinets that the French Government had merely in view to avail itself of the pretended negotiations, in order to bring over public opinion to its side, and that it did not seriously contemplate the establishment of peace in Europe.

“ Penetrating these secret intentions, the Allied Powers resolved to invade France, in order to conquer a peace which they so ardently desired. Numerous armies having crossed the Rhine, they had hardly passed the frontiers, when the French minister of

foreign affairs presented himself at the advanced posts. From that day forward all the proceedings of the French Government have had no other aim but to lead public opinion astray, to conceal its real intentions from the nation, and to throw on the Allies the odium of the miseries inseparable from invasion.

“ At that time the march of events made the Powers feel all the force of a European coalition. The principles which had guided the councils of the Sovereigns, from the very onset of their alliance for the general good, were completely unfolded. Nothing stood in the way of a declaration of the conditions indispensable to the reconstruction of the common edifice. After a whole series of victories these conditions should not have formed an obstacle to the re-establishment of peace. England, the only power which was to throw compensation to France into the scale of peace, could accurately count the sacrifices she was ready to make in favour of the general pacification. The Allied Sovereigns had, in short, reason to expect that experience would exert its influence over the conqueror, now that he was exposed to the reproaches of a great nation, and was for the first time in his own capital a witness of its sufferings. This experience was surely enough to make him feel that the preservation of thrones is identified with the observance of moderation and justice. The Allied Sovereigns, however, in their conviction that their consent to treat ought not to interfere with the march of military operations, resolved to continue them while the negotiations were going on. The history of the past and painful recollections had proved to them the necessity of this measure.

“ Their plenipotentiaries met at Châtillon with the plenipotentiary of the French Government.

“ Their victorious armies soon approached the capital. At this moment the Government thought only of saving it from hostile occupation. The French plenipotentiary received instructions to propose an armistice on bases similar to those which the Allied Courts had considered necessary to the re-establishment of a general peace. He offered the immediate surrender of the fortresses in those countries which France had agreed to renounce, but with the condition that hostilities should be suspended.

“ The allied courts, convinced by a twenty years' experience, that in negotiations with the French Cabinet, it was necessary carefully to distinguish between its apparent and its real intentions, declined the proposal of an armistice, but offered at once to sign the preliminaries of peace. This would have given France all the advantages of an armistice without exposing the Allies to the disadvantage of a suspension of hostilities.

“ In the meantime, some partial advantages attended the first operations of that army, which had been formed under the walls of Paris, out of the flower of the present generation, the last hope of the nation, and the remains of a million of brave warriors, who had fallen on the field of battle, or been abandoned on the high-roads from Lisbon to Moscow, as a sacrifice to advantages which were foreign to France.

“ The conferences at Châtillon immediately assumed a new aspect. The French plenipotentiary ceased to receive instructions, and was thus unable to give an answer to the offers of the allied courts. The

intention of the French Government appeared plain to the Allied Powers, who now resolved to act with decision, consistently with their dignity, their force, and the rectitude of their intentions. They instructed their plenipotentiaries to present a draft of a preliminary treaty, containing all the bases which they considered indispensable to the re-establishment of the balance of power, and which, but a few days before, had been proposed by the French Government itself, when it was doubtless alarmed for its proper existence. In this draft were unfolded the principles of the new arrangement of Europe. France placed again within the boundaries which had been secured to her by whole centuries of glory and prosperity under the sway of her kings, was to share with Europe in the blessings of freedom, national independence and peace. It rested with her Government, by one word, to put an end to the sufferings of the nation and to restore to it peace, colonies, and commerce, with the unshackled freedom of its industry. Did her ruler wish for more? The Allied Powers offered to examine, in a spirit of pacification, his wishes with respect to a territory which was mutually advantageous, but which was without the limits of France before the revolution.

“ A fortnight passed away without an answer from the French Government. The plenipotentiaries demanded that a term should be fixed for receiving or rejecting the conditions of peace. It was left to the French plenipotentiary to present his project on the one condition, that it should correspond with the spirit and substance of the terms proposed by the Allied Courts. By mutual consent the 26th February (10th March) was fixed on as the term. On its expiring, the French

plenipotentiary merely presented notes, the discussion of which, instead of accelerating the result aimed at, would have fruitlessly drawn out the negotiations. At the request of the French plenipotentiary, another term of a few days was granted him. At length, on the 3d (15th) March, he presented a new project, which left no doubt that the sufferings of France had not yet changed the views of her Government. Returning to its former proposal, a demand was now made that people, foreign to the spirit of the French nation, whom even centuries of French rule could not identify with it, should remain an integral part of that empire. Frontiers were to be given to France, inconsistent with the establishment of a system of equilibrium, and altogether out of proportion with the other great political bodies of Europe. France was to retain positions and points of attack, by the aid of which she had of late years, to the misfortune of Europe and to that of herself, overthrown so many thrones and wrought so many revolutions. The members of the reigning family in France were made to mount foreign thrones; and, in short, the French Government, which had so long striven to gain the supreme sway over Europe, by sowing the seeds of discord, as well as by force of arms, was to remain the mistress of the internal relations, and of the destiny of the European Powers.

“Under such circumstances, by continuing the negotiations, the allied courts would have proved themselves wanting to every duty they owed to themselves—they would have lost sight of the laudable end which they had proposed—and the efforts they had made would have turned but to the injury of their own people. By signing a treaty on the basis of the French project,

they would have put arms into the hands of the common enemy ; they would have deceived the expectations of the nations and abused the confidence of their allies.

“ At a moment so important to the general good, the Allied Sovereigns renew their solemn obligation not to lay down their arms till they have attained the grand object of their alliance. France has herself to blame for the evils she is suffering. Peace alone can heal the wounds inflicted upon her by that spirit of universal domination of her Government which is unexampled in history. That peace must be the peace of Europe. The time is at length arrived when rulers should think of the welfare of their people, fearless of foreign influence ; when nations should respect their mutual independence, and the laws of society should not be exposed to daily revolutions, when property should be rendered secure, and commerce free. All Europe is animated by one wish, and that wish is the expression of the first necessity of all nations. All have united for the defence of one cause, and that cause will triumph over the only obstacles which it has yet to surmount.”

The close of the Congress was announced to the army by Prince Schwarzenberg in an order issued on the eve of the Emperor's departure from Pougy.

“ Soldiers of the Allied Armies !

“ The hope of peace has vanished. Your victories, the destruction of whole armies, the ruin of the most fertile provinces of France, nothing could induce the French Government to return to the ways of moderation and justice. The negotiations at Châtillon are

ended. Let France be happy and free, but not at the expense of the independence and prosperity of other nations. Victors of Culm, Leipsic and Brienne ! The eyes of Europe are upon you ; the destiny of the world is in your hands ; but a few days more, and the universe will acknowledge you as its saviours."

CHAPTER XI.

The Allies march towards Paris.—Marmont and Mortier repulsed.— Battle at Fère Champenoise.— General Pacthod taken prisoner.— The French repulsed from Ferté Gaucher.— Approach of the Allies to the Marne.

ON the day the Emperor marched out of Vitry for Paris, the 13th March, the troops of the contending armies were disposed as follows: the Grand Army and its reserves formed a half circle of seven versts around Vitry, with the exception of Count Giulay who was still at Arcis. The corps of the Silesian army, viz: Count Langeron's and Sacken's, were at Chalons, General York's and Kleist's at Château Thierry, Baron Wintzengerode's at St. Dizier, and his infantry, under the command of Count Worontzoff, at Chalons. Napoleon, with the main body of his forces, was at Joinville, and his rear-guard between that town and St. Dizier, Marshals Marmont and Mortier, who were marching from the Aisne to join him, were at Vitry and Soude St. Croix, and the divisions of Generals Pacthod and Amé were at Etoges on their route from Paris. Thus the enemy's army was split in two, a part of it being led by Napoleon on our line of communications, and the remainder, under the command

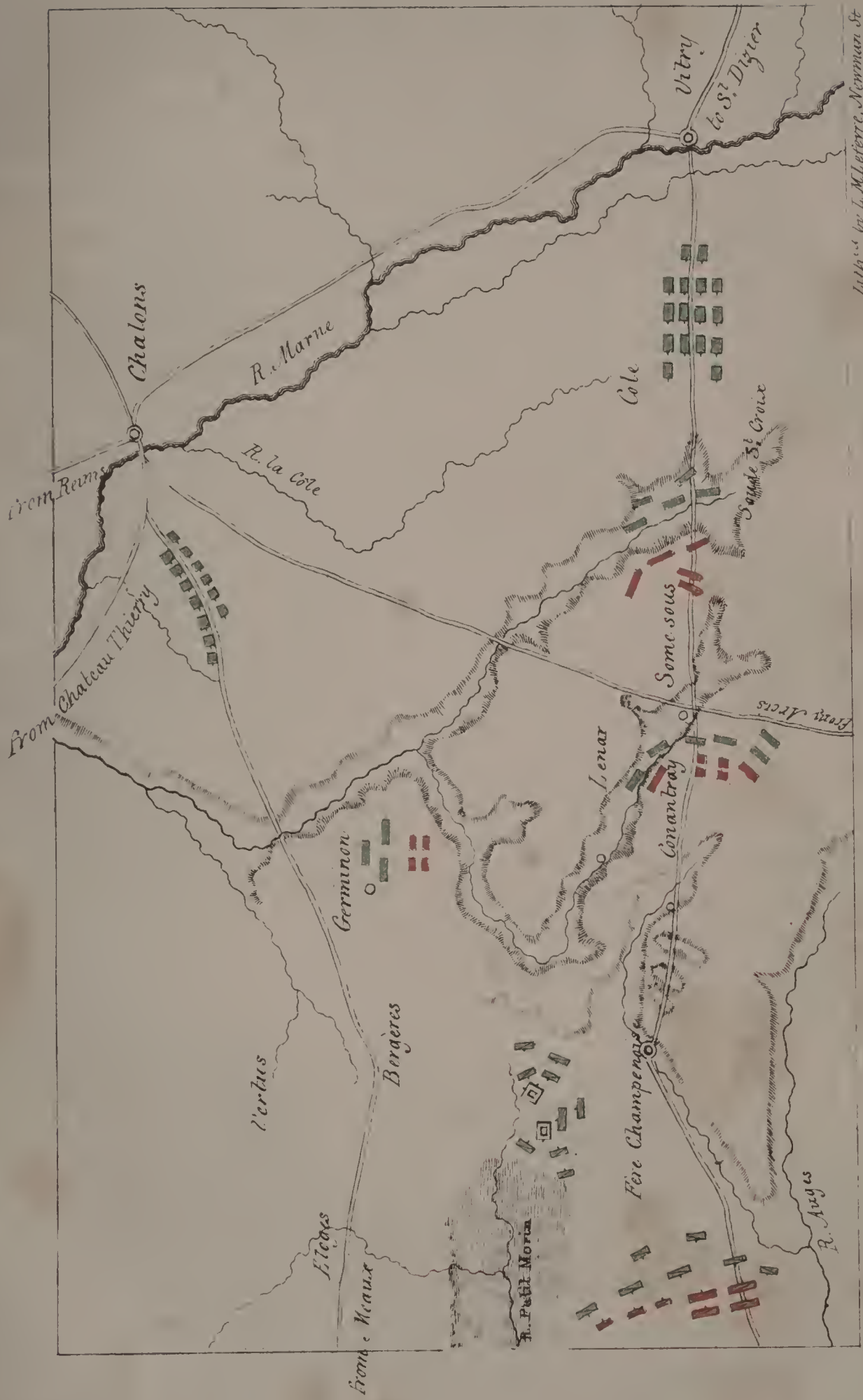
of Marshals Marmont and Mortier, and Generals Pacthod and Amé, between Paris and the allied armies, in full confidence that the road was open to them through Vitry to join Napoleon. So far were the French Marshals from suspecting that the allied armies were so near them, that on the very night on which the Emperor's head-quarters were at Vitry, Marmont was at Soude St. Croix, and his patrols were pushed as far as the village of Cole, ten versts distant from our camp. It is true that they did not fall in with our troops there, but still one cannot help wondering at the carelessness of the French Generals, who seem to have paid no attention to the vast illumination of the sky produced by the countless fires of our bivouacs round Vitry, and did not send to ascertain what troops were lying there. The total defeat, which they suffered a few hours after, was the consequence of their negligence.

On the 13th both of the allied armies moved on in the direction of Paris. That of Silesia marched in two columns: Blücher with the corps of Langeron, Sacken and Count Worontzoff from Chalons to Vertus, and York and Kleist from Château Thierry to Montmirail. The Grand Army marched out of Vitry at four o'clock in the morning in the following order. Raiéfsky and the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg took the lead and were followed by Count Wrédé and the reserves of Count Barclay. All these troops were ordered to reach Fère Champenoise and there to pass the night. The advanced-guard under the command of the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg consisted of Wirtemberg and Russian cavalry, the latter being led by Count Pahlen.

On arriving at Cole, Count Pahlen learned that the

PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF FERRE CHAMPENOISE.

13th March, 1814.



Litho'd by L. M. Lefevre, Nemours St.

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French patrols had actually been in the village that morning, and that the enemy was in considerable force at Soude St. Croix. We soon fell in with the French advanced troops. On seeing our forces, they began to retire to the position occupied by Marshals Marmont and Mortier beyond the little river Soude. Their infantry was standing there in two lines, having the artillery before them which opened a cannonade. For want of infantry on our side, it was impossible to attack this position in front. Count Pahlen therefore marched to turn the left wing, and the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg the right. Their troops were followed by a reinforcement of the second division of cuirassiers and some regiments of heavy Austrian horse. The French did not wait the result of this manœuvre, but retired to Sommesous, not however without loss, for the advanced-guard followed close at their heels, with the horse-artillery in advance, which played upon the enemy wherever the ground was favourable. Marshal Marmont halted at Sommesous in order to wait for Mortier who had passed the night at Vitry, and who having learned there that he could not continue his march on St. Dizier, began his retreat in good time. The fire of the French batteries, placed in front of the line of battle, checked the attack for a while, but being pressed by repeated attacks of our advanced-guard, Marmont retreated to the village of Lenar. Disorder was already visible in his corps : on the road to Lenar he lost four guns which were taken by Count Pahlen.

These operations lasted from eight o'clock in the morning till mid-day, and were the prelude to the battle of Fère Champenoise. The reports which Prince Schwarzenberg received from the Hereditary

Prince and Count Pahlen of their being engaged with a powerful enemy who seemed to have much infantry and artillery, and the declarations of the prisoners that the two Marshals were in the field, induced him to send orders to the corps of infantry which were still far behind the advanced-guard, to quicken their pace and to march in close column. At the same time he ordered Count Giulai's cavalry, which was on its way from Arcis to Fère Champenoise, to make all haste to advance on the right wing of the French. Count Barclay, on his side, wanted to send for the third division of cuirassiers, but General Deprerádovitch, who was standing by, informed him that it was still so far distant from the field of battle that it could not come up in time, and therefore requested leave to engage with the first division of cuirassiers which was under his command, and which had as yet taken no part in any action in France. The Commander-in-chief having given his consent, these chosen troops set off at a trot, the chevalier-guards taking the lead.

Meanwhile Marmont and Mortier had effected their junction, and their corps together amounted to 22,000 men. They had now nothing left but to retreat by the high road to Paris; for they saw that being met by the whole of the allied forces, they could not march on Vitry as Napoleon had directed. The French cavalry, which had kept in advance of the enemy's corps and covered their movements, was soon broken and routed by Count Pahlen. It then formed behind the infantry which in close column or in square continued the retreat towards Conantray; but before reaching that village, they were met by the hulans and dragoons of the guard with whom Count Ojarófsky

appeared on their extreme left. He was followed by the first division of cuirassiers. These regiments, reinforced by a troop of the horse-artillery of the guards, instantly went up to the attack and broke and cut down several French squares. The cavalry which had arrived from Spain tried to disengage the infantry, but was charged and broken by the chevalier-guards. At the same time Count Pahlen, as he continued to advance, came up with the detachment of Major-General Soslavin, who likewise dashed at the enemy.

These uninterrupted joint operations, at which the Grand Duke Constantine was present, were crowned with complete success. The enemy rushed in disorder through Conantray to Fère Champenoise, strewing the road with abandoned guns, ammunition waggons and baggage. Lest our description of the flight of the French, among whom was a part of Napoleon's guard, should be thought exaggerated, it may be as well to quote the words of one of their writers, Koch, who like all his countrymen, will not be suspected of partiality to the Allies. He says : "the confusion was so great, that 24 guns, more than 60 ammunition waggons and carts were abandoned before Conantray. Seized with a panic terror, artillery, cavalry and infantry fled in *déroute* to Fère Champenoise." * Of the artillery taken during the attack and pursuit of the enemy, or found abandoned, six guns were captured by the chevalier-guards, six by the horse-guards, three by the cuirassiers of His Majesty, six by the hulans of the guards, two by the life-guards, nine by Major-General Soslavin, and twenty by Count Pahlen.

* *Memoirs pour servir a l'histoire de la campagne de 1814.* Par Koch, T. III. page 386.

From Fère Champenoise the French took the road to Sezanne, marching in columns of battalions with the remains of the cavalry in the intervals. The Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and Count Pahlen continued to pursue them, but not with the same rapidity as before. This happened from two causes : in the first place, owing to the ravines between Conantray and Fère Champenoise, the artillery could not keep up with the cavalry ; in the second, because in the rear of the advanced-guard was heard a heavy cannonade, the cause of which was not immediately ascertained. The French considered it as the signal of Napoleon's arrival on our rear on his way to their assistance. In their ranks resounded the cry, once the harbinger of victory, of "*Vive l'Empereur !*" The infantry halted, and the cavalry, which was in the intervals, advanced to the attack, but Soslavin charged it in flank and broke it. In the meantime the first division of cuirassiers and a part of the artillery were required from the advanced-guard to be led against French troops which had appeared in the rear, and which were marching on the Emperor's head-quarters. Thus ended the pursuit of Marshals Marmont and Mortier who owed their safety to this unexpected circumstance and to the approaching darkness of the night. They halted for a few hours at Sezanne to restore order in their shattered corps. Let us now turn to what was going on in the rear of the advanced-guard.

The Emperor, the King of Prussia and Prince Schwarzenberg had left Vitry at nine o'clock in the morning by the great road leading to Fère Champenoise through Soude St. Croix, Sommesous and Conantray. They heard the distant firing which announced

the retreat of the enemy and our victorious pursuit, and messengers were continually arriving from the advanced-guard with reports of the captured trophies. The sun had not yet set when the Emperor arrived at Fère Champenoise where he was to pass the night. Most of those who accompanied his Majesty had retired to the quarters assigned to them, but the Emperor without dismounting, invited Prince Schwarzenberg to accompany him to the advanced-guard. His Majesty was followed by a small suite, and by a single squadron of the Cossacks of the guards ; for two squadrons of that regiment had by His Majesty's order, remained behind with Count Araktchéieff at Sommesous, to pick up the wounded French who were lying in great numbers on the road. The third squadron was at Fère Champenoise making arrangements for the head-quarters. At a short distance from the town, the Emperor met Raiéfsky who had halted with his corps ; further on was the light infantry under Shakhoffskóy. The Emperor greeted the troops, and as he went on was soon after passed by the horse-artillery, troop No. 23, of Colonel Marcóff, who was proceeding to the advanced-guard.

Hardly had the guns passed his Majesty, when an officer came galloping on, and to Prince Volkonsky's question, ' whence and whither,' answered that he was sent from Lieutenant-General Kretoff to Count Pahlen with a note. The Prince took the paper from him : Kretoff warned Pahlen to be on his guard, as the enemy was marching on Fère Champenoise. The Field Marshal to whom Prince Volkonsky showed the note, doubted the accuracy of its contents, and the Emperor told the chief of his staff that it was nonsense, and with an air of

displeasure added: "You always see the enemy double." Without paying further attention to this intelligence his Majesty went on. All at once, however, on the right hand appeared troops who were making straight for Fère Champenoise. Their appearance was the more unexpected to all, that the direction in which they were marching was not the natural one either for the Allies or the French. The Emperor and the Field Marshal now halted. Desiring to know what these troops really were, they sent Major-General Prince Volkonsky and the Field Marshal's aide-de-camp Klammm, the same who is now General aide-de-camp to the Emperor Ferdinand, to take a near view of them. A few minutes had hardly elapsed before they were both fired on. Doubt was now at an end: all saw that it was the enemy.

We shall now explain in what way the French thus suddenly appeared in the midst of the Allied Armies. Early in the morning, when the affair with the cavalry of the advanced-guard began, a similar combat took place between the cavalry of the army of Silesia and the French divisions of infantry of Generals Pacthod and Amé. These were on their march from Paris to join Napoleon's army, and had along with them sixteen guns, a few squadrons of cavalry, and a vast number of carts, with supplies of every kind. By this very road, but in the opposite direction, the corps of Langeron, Sacken and Worontzoff were marching from Chalons to Vertus: the encounter was thus inevitable, though it was equally unexpected to us as to the French. Field Marshal Blücher, who had no suspicion of the enemy being at hand, was in his carriage on his way from Chalons and without an escort. He was advancing

by a by-road on a line with his advanced-guard when he was told that French light horse were in view.

General Korf who commanded Count Langeron's advanced-guard which had taken the lead of the Silesian army, was the first who saw the enemy. While he was reconnoitring, Generals Pacthod and Amé likewise got sight of our light-cavalry, and formed in order of battle. Their baggage carts stood behind the infantry on its right wing, and the artillery opened its fire. In the beginning of the affair, Baron Korf had only four guns, the remainder having been prevented from coming up by the breaking down of a bridge. The cavalry under his command consisted of fourteen squadrons. These he sent to turn the enemy's flanks and kept the French occupied on their front, expecting that the troops which were on their march from Chalons would speedily come up. The French cavalry were broken by the first charge, and disbanding were almost all made prisoners by the Cossacks.

Generals Pacthod and Amé soon perceived that reinforcements were coming up to the troops which had attacked them, and had perhaps received information that the whole army was at hand, and that it was impossible for them to make their way to Chalons or to Vitry. They therefore struck off in the direction of Fère Champenoise, halting occasionally as they retired, to give time to their immense waggon train to move on in good order, though a considerable part of it had already been cut off and captured. Baron Korf and Vassiltchikof who had come up with the cavalry of Sacken's advanced-guard, kept bearing down on the French both in flank and rear, and several times attacked them, but they were manfully received

by the enemy who, firing and retreating, continued to retire to Fère Champenoise in a direction which brought them almost close to the Emperor.

As soon as his Majesty had ascertained that the enemy was before him, he instantly despatched all the officers around him with orders to bring up to Fère Champenoise whatever troops they should fall in with. He also ordered Marcóff to return with his troop of horse-artillery and place it under the command of the Prussian General Rauch, the same who is now at the head of the engineer department in that country. The appearance of the Emperor and these guns deceived for a few minutes both the French and the Russians who were following them. The former, from a distance, perceiving the Emperor on an eminence, surrounded by a numerous and constantly increasing suite consisting of officers and escorts from Fère Champenoise, thought it was one of their marshals come to disengage them, and in their joy set up a shout of “*Vive l'Empereur !*” Vassiltchikof hearing the noise and observing that a battery was being planted near the Emperor, the balls of which already began to reach his hussars, ordered the guns to be drawn out and a fire opened against the battery. Four Russian balls actually fell on the height where the Emperor was standing. Fortunately at this moment a Cossack of the guards with his long lance was observed on Vassiltchikof's right, from whom he learned the real state of the case. The misunderstanding being cleared up, he immediately sent to inform his Majesty that he was in the rear of the French with the cavalry.

At the same time an aide-de-camp arrived from Baron Korf, by whom the Emperor sent an order to that general, not to press too hard on the French who

had formed in two columns, but to give time for the play of the battery planted in their rear; in order to deprive the enemy of all possibility of escape, his Majesty at the same time ordered Korf to surround them and to watch all their motions. When repeated discharges of grape had begun to make lanes in one of the enemy's columns, and it was seen to waver, the Emperor gave the order to attack; but at the moment the cavalry was about to charge, the French laid down their arms. His Majesty then ordered the other column to be attacked which was done by Lieutenant-General Borozdin who captured six pieces of cannon; but the French forming anew, continued to retreat.

Our numbers kept continually increasing. The troops who were still behind the advanced-guard, hearing that the Emperor was in danger, rushed forward from every side. Dense clouds of dust darkened the air: hussars, hulans, light-dragoons, and cuirassiers came up at full trot; and Raiéfsky's infantry in double-quick time. In the meantime the French began to make their way to the marsh of St. Gond; but Lieutenant-General Deprerádovitch, advancing with the chevalier-guards, and four guns of the horse-artillery of the guards, cut off their retreat. The Emperor's aide-de-camp, Rapatel; Captain Durnoff of the General Staff; and the King of Prussia's aide-de-camp, Tile,—were sent to require them to surrender; but the French remained inflexible and fired on these officers. Rapatel was killed by a bullet from a square, in the ranks of which stood his own brother. Seeing there was nothing else to be done, the chevalier-guards, the hulans, and Cossacks of the guards, with Korf's, Vassiltchikof's, and Borozdin's

horse, charged the enemy's infantry at the same moment, broke into the square and rode over it.

The Emperor had entered the square along with the cavalry, who attacked it. While the French, some swearing and others in tears, were throwing down their muskets and stripping themselves of their side-arms, cartridge-boxes, and havresacks, the Emperor entered into conversation with Pauthod, now a prisoner, who, in his answers, kept calling His Majesty "General." "You see the Emperor before you," said I to the prisoner. "That is impossible," answered he: "your Emperor would certainly never advance in person to attack infantry with cavalry alone." The Emperor, who overheard our conversation, desired me not to undeceive the French General. Five other generals, who had been taken prisoners, were here presented to His Majesty. He complimented them on the courage they had displayed, ordered their equipages to be restored to them, and the prisoners in general to be taken care of; these covered the plain, their number at this single point amounting to 4,000.

Ten thousand prisoners, among whom were nine generals, eighty guns, two hundred ammunition waggons, with the whole of the baggage and parks, were the trophies of the battle at Fère Champenoise, in which the loss of the Allies amounted to two thousand men. This combat is the more remarkable as having taken place on a march, without any previous arrangement, between cavalry alone and two corps of infantry. By the march route for this day, the troops had been ordered to reach Fère Champenoise, a distance of thirty versts. Not knowing that Mortier and Marmont were at a very short distance from Vitry, nobody had

thought of falling in with the enemy ; yet, though the appearance of the French was so unexpected, and the troops had been fighting the whole day, they reached their destination in good time. Our infantry did not fire a shot, but merely followed the cavalry, which covered itself with glory. The number engaged amounted to 13,000, of which the greater part were Russians. The chief honour of the day is due to Count Pahlen; he was the first to discover the French, and the first to attack them; and he never ceased harassing them till the evening. The greater part of our trophies was captured by him.

The victory at Fère Champenoise was peculiarly important, inasmuch as it hastened the surrender of Paris. If Mortier and Marmont had not lost the half of their troops in this battle, along with eighty pieces of cannon, they would have been able to prolong the contest under the walls of Paris, and have given Napoleon time to arrive. As it was, he was only a few hours too late; but if he had reached Paris in time, he would probably have exhausted every means of defence. For this reason the defeat of the French at Fère Champenoise must be viewed as the harbinger of the subjugation of Paris, and of the fall of Napoleon.

On the following day, the 14th of March, the united armies continued to advance. The Grand Army kept its former order: the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg with his own corps, and that of Raiéfsky, formed the advanced guard, which Count Pahlen led with the cavalry, having orders to pursue the enemy, and if possible to reach La Ferté-Gaucher. The remaining corps, along with which were the Allied Sovereigns, followed after, and were to halt for the night about

Meillerey and Trefaux. The army of Silesia marched by two roads. Count Langeron, Sacken, and Worontzoff, from Vertus, on Montmirail; and York and Kleist, on La Ferté Gaucher, where they must necessarily come in contact with the French Marshals, who had been beaten the day before, and who were marching thither from Sezanne. Field-Marshal Blücher ordered General Emanuel to advance by forced marches to the environs of Meaux, and after choosing a proper place, to throw a bridge over the Marne.

While these preparations were making, to enable the armies to continue their march to Paris, the Allies did not forget Napoleon, after whom they had sent, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, General Wintzengerode, with a considerable force of cavalry. On the day the Emperor left Fère Champenoise, a report was received from that General, stating, that having reached St. Dizier, he had occupied that town, and was lying in view of the enemy, whose principal forces were concentrated at Vassy, the head-quarters of Napoleon. "We must wait," said Wintzengerode to the Emperor, "till the French reach Doulevant: we shall then be able to ascertain what route they will take." Although it was plain from this report that Napoleon did not yet know of the march of the Allies on Paris, it was natural to think that he could not long remain ignorant of it. For this reason, in order to guard our flank and rear from a sudden attack, strict orders were sent to our flying parties, who had been sent out in various directions, enjoining them to redouble their watchfulness. "It is His Majesty's desire," Prince Volkonsky wrote to General Chernisheff from Fère Champenoise, "that you should watch with

the utmost care the enemy's motions on your right flank, and give us notice of them without delay. General Wintzengerode has been instructed to do the same. If the French army should turn round upon us, he is to unite with you, and by every means to impede its march." In short, the detachments of General Chernisheff, Kaissárof, and Soslávin, were so situated, that they could, with the greatest ease, inform us of Napoleon's attempts on the rear of the Grand Army, or on the left bank of the Seine.

On the 14th of March, at four o'clock in the morning, the Grand Army marched from Fère Champenoise, along the high-road to Sezanne. The French had decamped in the night, and on approaching Sezanne had fallen in unexpectedly, with the Prussian cavalry of General Ziethen, who had been sent forward from Montmirail, and had an affair with the enemy before day-break. This sudden meeting caused an alarm both among the Prussian and the French troops. Ziethen had entered Sezanne, convinced that the French had passed through the town, and the enemy's generals, on their side, thought it was not yet occupied by the allied troops. After a trifling skirmish the latter continued their march. The grand object was, that York and Kleist should reach La Ferté Gaucher before the enemy, and bar his retreat. There they were to receive Mortier and Marmont, in whose rear the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and Raïéfsky had been sent from Fère Champenoise. The Prussians marched very slowly to La Ferté Gaucher. Although twice as near to this point from Montmirail as the French were to it from Sezanne, they had not all arrived when Mortier appeared with the advanced-

guard: yet, after all, a small part of their troops was sufficient to arrest the progress of this marshal. He tried several times to force his way through La Ferté Gaucher, but without success. If York and Kleist had come up in time, they would not only have stopped the French, but would have gone out and attacked them, while the enemy would have been taken in the rear by the advanced-guard of the Grand Army. The truth is, that towards the end of this campaign, the Prussians did not always show the same activity as in the preceding year. Fully assured that their country was saved, their national honour avenged, and their hated enemy humbled, they began to look with something like indifference on a war, the speedy termination of which was every day becoming more evident.

Count Pahlen, marching in advance of the Grand Army, always kept in sight of the French rear-guard, which sometimes halted, taking advantage of the ground and of the streams falling into the river Grand-Morin, along which runs the high-road. He, therefore, resolved to go round about, and avoiding all the rivulets, bear down on the right wing of the French, and press them close up to the Grand-Morin and La Ferté-Gaucher, and thus cut off their retreat to Provins, which afforded them the only chance of safety or of rejoining Napoleon on the left bank of the Seine. With this intention, leaving the great road to the right, Count Pahlen marched through Courgivaux to Maisonnelles, where he heard the firing at La Ferté-Gaucher between the Prussians and Mortier's advanced-guard; his Cossacks, who were in advance, reached the village of Moutis, where the heads of the enemy's columns had already begun to show themselves.

An hour or two more and Count Pahlen's admirable manœuvre would, in all probability, have been crowned with complete success: Marmont and Mortier, surrounded on all sides, and attacked in front by the Prussians, in the rear by the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, and in flank by Count Pahlen, would have been forced to surrender or fall with their arms in their hands. Even if they had thought of forcing their way, their resistance could not have been obstinate; for at Fère Champenoise they had lost almost all their artillery, and in both corps, as we afterwards learned, there were only seven pieces of cannon. The main result of the defeat, which seemed here to await them, consisted in this, that there would have been nobody to defend Paris, which the Marshals were afterwards allowed to reach, and where, before their arrival, there were no other troops but the National Guards, skeletons of regiments, and recruiting depôts; and thus the capital of France must have laid her keys at the feet of the conquerors, without firing a shot. Like Napoleon on the banks of the Berésina, and at Hanau, Mortier and Marmont narrowly escaped total destruction at La Ferté Gaucher.

Count Pahlen had not advanced far in his detour when the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg was seized with apprehensions for the safety of his artillery; for on this day he had given an additional number of guns to the Count, who, during the combat at Fère Champenoise, had too few. He immediately sent orders for him to return to the high road, and the Count, being obliged to obey, left the Cossacks alone on the enemy's flank, and returned to his former station in their rear. Overjoyed to see him retire, the French no longer ad-

vanced to La Ferté Gaucher, but immediately turned off through Courtaçon towards Provins, whither they were followed by the Cossacks, whom they had forced to give way. The corps of the Prince of Wirtemberg, and the whole army, continued their march by the high road to the Marne. Marmont and Mortier made all haste to Provins, where they halted, to give their troops some repose ; but they were not allowed long to enjoy it. Hardly had Count Pahlen's Cossacks, under the command of General Soslavin, appeared, when the French, in the greatest disorder, rushed out of Provins, and made the best of their way to Nangis, from whence they marched to Paris by two roads, Mortier through Guignes, and Marmont through Melun.

On this day, the 14th March, the Emperor left Fère Champenoise at day-break. The troops marched in order on both sides of the road ; on the right Raiefsky's corps, and on the left the Wirtembergers. The Austrians and Bavarians were in the second line, and behind them the guards and grenadiers : the columns of the army of Silesia were seen like a waving black line to the right. The weather was beautiful ; the rays of a spring sun were reflected from the glittering arms of the host, and rendered this triumphant march truly magnificent. A flourish of martial music, and the roll of drums, mingled with loud and hearty hurrahs, announced the Emperor, as he rode up to every regiment. He several times rode through the ranks of the grenadier corps and the guards, and greeted the generals and colonels of regiments, almost all of whom had been formed under his own eye. " My lads," said Alexander to the soldiers, " 'tis now but a step to Paris !" He would sometimes ascend an eminence by the way

side, and gaze on the serried columns, extending as far as the eye could reach, and all pressing forward to the completion of their mighty enterprize. On this occasion, I cannot but remember a trait, which, to those who never had the happiness of knowing the Emperor, will serve to know how kind, how gracious he was. From one of these heights he observed Prince Volkonsky, who, after the remark made to him the day before, that “he always saw the enemy double,” was slowly riding on, pensive and alone. The Emperor invited him to approach, and, in presence of the King of Prussia and a numerous suite, said to him, “*Je vous dois une réparation d’honneur.*” * “I offended you yesterday, and I now publicly beg your pardon.”

In the evening, the Emperor and the King of Prussia arrived to pass the night in the village of Tréfaux, to the right of the high road. The Grand Army bivouacked round the village, and that of Silesia did the same, almost in a line with it, at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. After a short rest, the troops were ordered to make all haste, on the following day, to the passages of the Marne. There was indeed no time to lose; the rather, that soon after the Emperor’s arrival at Tréfaux, expresses arrived from Generals Chernisheff and Kaisàrof, with reports that the French army had begun to draw towards Brienne, and had occupied Troyes, and that Napoleon was believed to have passed the night at Bar-sur-Aube. Although no intelligence of his movements had been received from General Wintzengerode, who had been more especially charged to watch them, still the direction of the French, as pointed out by the partizans, gave occasion to various orders from His

* The words in italics are in the French language in the original. Tr.

Majesty to the commanders of the flying detachments : the greater part of the night was spent in preparing them. Their substance is contained in the following communication from Prince Volkonsky to General Wintzengerode. From its conclusion may likewise be seen what the Emperor intended to do, if Napoleon should reach Paris at the same time with the allies : “I am commanded by His Majesty to inform you, that from reports just received from Generals Chernisheff and Kaissárof, it seems probable that Napoleon is marching from Bar-sur-Aube to Troyes. As at that town he will have a choice of two roads to Paris, the one by Nogent and Pont-sur-Seine, the other through Sens and Moret, it is of the greatest consequence that our partizans should give us timely notice of his real direction. It is His Majesty’s pleasure that you should follow Napoleon with all possible activity, and harass him day and night on his march, which will considerably weaken his army. Kaissárof and Soslávin will receive orders to proceed along the banks of the Seine, in order to deprive the enemy of the means of constructing bridges. Your chief object is not to lose sight of the enemy ; and if, as we think, Napoleon should advance from Troyes on Sens, Moret and Fontainebleau, you will, by turning his left wing, by the forest of Fontainebleau, be always on the enemy’s flank and rear, while both our armies, after crossing the Seine at Paris, will march to attack him in front.”

CHAPTER V.

Affair at St. Dizier.—Wintzengerode retreats to Chalons.—Critical Position of Napoleon.—He resolves to march on Paris.—Napoleon and Alexander cross the Marne.—Approach of the Allies to Paris.—The Emperor Alexander's Directions to the Allied Armies.—Movements of the Allies.—Marie Louise flies from Paris to Tours.—Proclamation of the Allies to the Parisians.

AFTER Marshals Mortier and Marmont had retired by the road to Provins, there still remained on the Paris road a few scattered parties which had assembled about Meaux. They were joined by the division of General Compans, who had succeeded in passing through La Ferté Gaucher before the Prussians had occupied that town. The road to Paris was now open, and there being nothing to impede the march of the allied armies, they advanced, on the 15th, towards Trilport and Meaux as the most convenient places for crossing the Marne; the army of Silesia from La Ferté-sous-Jouarre and the grand army through Coulommiers.

The Emperor had hardly reached Coulommiers, when he received a report from the Prussian Colonel Schvikhoff, commandant of Vitry, that Napoleon, having beaten Wintzengerode, was approaching Vitry with all his forces. This news was so much the more unexpected, as our partizans had not only given us no notice of such an event, but on the contrary had in-

formed us the day before, that Napoleon appeared to be marching on Troyes.

“The emperor commands me,” Prince Volkonsky thus wrote to Wintzengerode, “to send you a copy of a report just received, from the contents of which you will see that events are spoken of, of which we have received no information. His Majesty will not attach credit to this report till he receive its confirmation from you. The enemy’s movement is so completely contradictory of what General Chernishéff has reported, that it is absolutely necessary to have this circumstance explained.”

In the course of a few hours it was proved, that the reports of the commandant of Vitry and General Chernisheff were both correct. Napoleon had marched from Doulevante towards Bar-sur-Aube; and some of his troops, as Chernishéff had reported, were actually on the road to Troyes; but receiving no report from the rear-guard, commanded by Macdonald, he sent to know what was going on there. The marshal answered that during three days he had seen nothing but cavalry opposed to him, and that he was inclined to think that the allies were not following him, and that they had marched in some other direction. This induced Napoleon to order the army to return and concentrate at Vassy, in order to make an attack on the allied troops, which were following his rear-guard, and thus to ascertain whether Macdonald was right in his conjecture or not.

This occurred on the 13th March, on the day of the victory of Fère Champenoise. On the following day, Macdonald’s rear-guard stood on the same ground it had occupied on the preceding evening. His advanced

posts were at Hembécourt, beyond which were seen large bodies of infantry, but no movement was yet visible in the enemy's camp. Baron Wintzengerode, who was at St. Dizier, ordered the advanced guard, under Tettenborn, to begin skirmishing, with the view of discovering the ulterior plans of the French; General Benkendorf was to support him. The flankers had hardly moved out, when the enemy's advanced guard was put in motion, and came on, followed by immense columns of infantry, extending as far as the eye could reach. It was evident that the French army was making a general attack; and one of Macdonald's aide-de-camps, who was taken prisoner by the Cossacks, stated that Napoleon himself was in the field.

Tettenborn reported this to the commander of the corps, and requested that no reinforcements should be sent him, the enemy's numerical superiority being so great, that a reinforcement to the advanced guard would only block up the road, and prevent it from retreating easily and speedily. The attack of the French, indeed, was so rapid, and made with such overpowering forces, that it was out of the question to think of resisting it. Some regiments of French infantry having entered the wood between Hembécourt and Valcourt, in order to cut off the advanced guard from the Marne, it was obliged instantly to retire to the right bank of the river.

The enemy's troops deployed with incredible rapidity; column after column descended into the plain, and showers of balls and shells fell on the banks of the Marne. Under cover of their batteries, placed between Valcourt and St. Dizier, the French infantry, cavalry and artillery, crossed the Marne by a ford, and

moved along the Vitry road against the advanced guard, which consisted of about a thousand men, who were now cut off from St. Dizier. Ten thousand French cavalry had already crossed the Marne, and were beginning to form on the right bank of the river. With the view of checking their attack for a moment, Tettenborn resolved to fall upon them before they had completed their formation. In the heat of the attack he came upon the French batteries, was met by their fire, and at the same time surrounded by the horse of the rear lines, which fell upon his flanks and broke them. A whole cloud of horse, in one confused mass, with cries and shouts, now scampered along the Vitry road, riding straight upon the baggage and spare horses, which made the confusion still greater. The pursuit ended at the village of Perte, where Tettenborn collected his detachment, and retired towards Vitry.

Having routed the advanced guard, Napoleon turned against General Wintzengerode, who, during the affair we have been describing, had formed between the Vitry and Bar-le-Duc roads. He had only about 5000 horse, the remaining 3000 being with Tettenborn and Chernishéff; the latter was on this day on the road to Montierander, to the right of the corps. Wintzengerode's left flank was covered by General Benkendorf, who, during the rout of the advanced guard, had contrived to make his way through St. Dizier, and to occupy the road to Bar-le-Duc, the only route by which our corps could now retreat. One French battalion was already marching to occupy it, but was broken and routed by two squadrons of hussars, under the command of Colonel Alférief, whom Benkendorf had sent against it. Benkendorf then placed a few guns on the

Bar-le-Duc road, which kept the enemy at a respectful distance, and thus secured a retreat for the corps.

Napoleon's attack on General Wintzengerode was as severe and as successful as it had been an hour before against the advanced guard; our cavalry was broken in the centre, and not even the bold attacks of Count O'Rourke and General Balk could arrest the enemy. They were hardly allowed time to fire a few rounds: in a few minutes cavalry and artillery were fairly routed. "Tout fut entraîné et dut céder," said General Wintzengerode, in his report to the Emperor. Our regiments in disorder now made for the road to Bar-le-Duc, on which, as we have said, General Benkendorf had taken up a good position. There being a morass on his right flank, it could not be turned, and he had placed three regiments of Cossacks, under the command of Major General Narishkin, to protect his left. Napoleon made every effort to overpower Benkendorf's detachment, which was now the only obstacle to a vigorous pursuit. Two squadrons of the hussars of Izewm, under the command of Colonel Loshcareff, in advance of the position, were instantly attacked and broken; but six squadrons of the hussars of Pavlograd, and the well directed discharges of the artillery, checked the advance of the French, and enabled General Benkendorf to retire, in good order, along the Bar-le-Duc road to the village of Brillon, where the approaching darkness induced the French to give up the pursuit. In the mean time, thanks to Benkendorf's obstinate defence, the remainder of the corps assembled round Bar-le-Duc, from whence, on the following day, they continued their retreat towards Châlons. Our loss on this day amounted to a thousand

men killed or taken prisoners, and five pieces of cannon. The heaviest loss was sustained by the 6th regiment of light infantry; yet more than a half of the men, who were supposed to have been made prisoners, were fortunate enough to make their way through the woods, and to rejoin the corps. If Benkendorf had not retired in good time from the advanced guard through St. Dizier to the Bar-le-Duc road, and there resisted the furious attack of the French, Napoleon would have met with no obstacle in that direction, and pursuing the broken troops, would have made their defeat still more disastrous: the corps owed its safety entirely to the judicious dispositions and cool resolution of Benkendorf.

This success at St. Dizier was the farewell smile of fortune to Napoleon. From that moment she abandoned him for ever. This was also the last combat of the campaign, in which he commanded in person, and in which, while standing on the extreme verge of his career, he was destined to meet the troops of Alexander, as if to impress indelibly on his memory that he, and he alone, was the true author of his fall. Victory perhaps was never accompanied by bitterer disappointment than at the present moment; for it raised the curtain which had concealed futurity from Napoleon. He now learned that his manœuvre, on the communications of the allies, had not only failed to draw the Allied Sovereigns after the French to St. Dizier, as he had expected, but had inspired the Emperor Alexander with the idea of marching on Paris. The prisoners at length confirmed this painful news, which at first he refused to believe, proving that, in spite of all his strength of character, he too shared the common

failing of mortals, who seeing destruction before their eyes, willingly deceive themselves for a time, in the fond hope that the cup of evil is not yet full, and that the torch of safety is not altogether extinguished.

The fatal news of the march of the allies on Paris being altogether unexpected to Napoleon, threw him into a momentary state of inaction. He walked in silence over the field of battle, and ordering such of the Russian officers and men as wore badges of distinction to be assembled, he went up to them, spoke kindly with them, praised their valour, and ordered the wounded to be taken care of. He likewise sent General Gérard to make enquiries after the wounds of Colonel Loshcareff, the same who had been bred to the profession of arms under the eye of Dorokhoff, whom our old hussars have certainly not forgotten.

On returning to St. Dizier, Napoleon looked long and carefully over the map of the theatre of war. It seemed as if the declarations of the prisoners had not convinced him; for on the following day he marched towards Vitry, perhaps not without some hope of falling in with the Allied Armies. On reaching that town he called for its surrender, but receiving a refusal, he ordered 120 guns to be planted against it, and gave notice to the commandant that he was going to reduce the town to ashes. At this moment some of the inhabitants of the environs of Fère-Champenoise presented themselves, from whom he learned the news of the victory gained there by the allies, and of their advance along the road to Meaux. The spell was now fairly broken, and all doubt at an end. “*Nothing but a thunderbolt can save us,*” exclaimed he to those around him. Not a shot was fired from the guns which were

turned against Vitry. Of what advantage would the possession of that town have been to Napoleon, while the storm of destruction was hanging over Paris, and when he was in hourly expectation of hearing of its fall? He immediately ordered his army to march on the capital; but from the agitation of the moment, or from some other cause not yet discovered, he did not take the nearest road from Vitry to Paris through Sezanne, or through Ramerupt and Troyes, but chose the longest route by St. Dizier, Vassy, Troyes and Sens.

Thus, at one and the same time, Alexander and Napoleon were marching on Paris, where each of these mighty rivals hoped to have the chances of war on his side, and both crossed the Marne with the same intention; the former at Trilport and Meaux, the latter at St. Dizier.

The putting up of the bridge at Meaux had been entrusted to General Emanuel, who for that purpose had been detached, on the 14th March, from the Silesian army, with two regiments of infantry, the Kief dragoons, two companies of pioneers, 18 guns, and Colonel Ivánof's company of pontooneers. His route lay through La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, which was occupied by the enemy. Here a pretty warm affair occurred with the French, in which some battalions of Prussians, who had joined General Emanuel, took part. The enemy were beaten and forced to cross the Marne. While the combat was going on, the general sent forward the pontoons to Trilport, and, after driving the French out of La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, hastened thither with the remainder of the detachment.

On the 15th March General Emanuel reached Trilport, where he found that the opposite bank of the

Marne was but feebly guarded by the enemy, who had not expected the allied troops to arrive so soon, thinking, probably, that the detachment stationed at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre would hold out longer. His batteries soon cleared the bank of the French. During the cannonade, and while the bridge was being thrown over, the Cossacks, and two companies of infantry, were ferried across on a raft, when they instantly attacked and occupied a wood. The enemy, on learning this, sent out infantry from Meaux, planted cannon on the heights, and opened a fire on the bridge and the columns, which were standing under arms on the opposite bank, in readiness to cross. A few columns of French infantry now advanced to the bridge and to the wood, which was occupied by our two companies. To reinforce the latter, General Emanuel sent over by the raft the regiments of Archangel and Staro-Ingermanland, which charged with the bayonet, and routed the French. In the mean time, the pontoons gliding down the Marne, were made fast one after another, and the bridge soon groaned under the weight of five battalions of Prussians, who, crossing to the opposite bank, attacked the enemy. They were followed by the dragoons of Kieff. After forming under the fire of the French, this regiment advanced to turn them, charged their horse, and pursued them to the suburbs of the Meaux, to which their infantry also speedily retreated. Night put an end to the combat, and General Emanuel posted his troops on the heights which had been occupied by the enemy. In this way was surmounted the last natural obstacle which covered Paris.

While this was going on, the Emperor was at Coulommiers, which he left on the 16th for Queney, where

he was obliged to spend the whole day, waiting till the army should have passed the Marne ; for the passage was not effected so soon as had been expected. This arose not so much from the great number of the troops as from misunderstandings inseparable from the composition of the Allied Armies, which were formed of the troops of six different powers. Reports having reached the Emperor that acts of plunder had been committed by some of the allied troops, he ordered the generals to be reminded of the necessity of being doubly strict at so critical a moment as that of the concluding scene of a long and general war. To this effect the Head of His Majesty's staff, Prince Volkonsky, addressed the following circular order to the generals in command of corps :—" It is the immutable will of His Majesty the Emperor, that the troops under your command should observe the strictest discipline, and, on no account whatever, leave the bivouacs in order to go into the villages ; and that their wants, such as fire, wood, straw, &c. should not be supplied otherwise than through the intervention of the mayors. You cannot but be aware how much the good conduct of our troops, in the present circumstances, may influence the common success, and therefore His Majesty will hold you personally responsible for the observance of this order."

Not satisfied with giving orders to the Russian generals with respect to the observance of discipline, His Majesty directed to the same object the attention of the foreign commanders of corps. The following letter was written by His Majesty's own hand to Count Wrédié :—" At the moment we are approaching the walls of Paris, it is only by the strictest subordination among the troops that we can expect to obtain the im-

portant results we have in view. You were one of the first to be convinced of the necessity of gaining over the affections of the inhabitants of Paris to the cause we are defending ; but we shall be acting in the face of this conviction if the villages round Paris be left a prey to plunderers, instead of finding protection in our armies. Your principles are to me a sufficient assurance of the good order which, at the present decisive moment, you will cause to be observed in the corps under your command. I most earnestly engage you to use every possible means to prevent acts of violence. Every commander of a corps or detachment should be made personally responsible for whatever disorder may be committed. Your active exertions, on this occasion, will secure you the general gratitude, and double the high respect I entertain for you."

The whole of the 16th, and a part of the 17th, were employed in transporting the armies across the Marne, by three pontoon bridges, of which there were two at Trilport and a third at Meaux. The advanced guard of the army of Silesia, reinforced by the corps of Generals York and Kleist, moved forward, and got engaged in a warm affair at Claye and Ville-Parisis. The arrangements for the advance were, that as soon as Raiéfsky's corps should reach Claye, Blücher should strike off on the right to the Soissons road, and attack Paris both by that road and through St. Denis, while the Grand Army should march on Paris straight from Meaux through Claye and Bondy. By way of precaution, Count Wrédié, with his own corps and General Sacken's, was left at Meaux to keep Napoleon at bay, if he should have followed the Allied Armies, with the intention of attacking them in the rear.

At day-break on the 17th, the Emperor, the King of Prussia, and Prince Schwarzenberg, left Quincy for Meaux. From the latter town the Sovereigns went on to Claye, beyond which, on both sides of the road, stood the Russian advanced guard, which welcomed the Monarchs with joyful acclamations. As the country between Meaux and Claye had not yet been the theatre of war, flourishing villages, corn stacks, beautiful gardens, and country houses, were to be seen on every side. Here and there stood the inhabitants, gazing, in mute astonishment, on the allied troops. They could not comprehend how we had got amongst them ; for the French Government had succeeded, by means of lying proclamations, in convincing the good people in the environs of Paris, that the war would respect them.

At Meaux the Emperor reviewed Sacken's corps, and thanked him and the troops for their services, and for their patience under fatigue and privation. There were 6000 men under arms, being less than a third of the number that had crossed the Rhine. They were by no means remarkable for a brilliant exterior ; for, during the two last campaigns, and especially in France, they had been continually fighting or marching. In some of the gun-carriages might even be observed the wheel of a farmer's cart. But these deficiencies, which could soon be supplied, were compensated by the glory which the corps had earned. Those admirable troops might boldly have been compared to the best of Cæsar's legions. From the advanced guard the Monarchs went on to the advanced posts, which were placed in front of Ville-Parisis, and there, from a wooded height, discovered from four to five thousand of

the enemy, consisting partly of troops belonging to General Compan's division, and partly of reinforcements from the capital. The troops on both sides stood looking at each other without firing, the attack from our side being delayed till the arrival of Raiéfsky's advanced guard which was to relieve the Prussians. At mid-day it came up, when, agreeably to the previous dispositions, the armies moved on in three columns; the right under Blücher marched on Mory, Villepin and Dugny; the left, under the command of the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, consisting of His Highness's corps and that of Count Giulay, along the Marne from Charmantray through Chelles towards Vincennes; and the centre commanded by Count Barclay, and consisting of Raiéfsky's corps, the grenadiers and the guards, by the great road to Bondy.

The French did not seem inclined to retire from the forest of Bondy without making resistance, for they did not move, notwithstanding the advance of the allied troops. The Emperor himself, ordered Raiéfsky's advanced guard to divide; Count Pahlen with the cavalry, and Helfreich's division of infantry, to march round to the left through Couberon, Montfermeil, and Rancy, towards Romainville; and Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg, straight on the forest. The French received the Prince with a fire of musketry, but soon began to retire, so that the occupation of the forest was not attended with much bloodshed. The French only halted occasionally where the nature of the ground was favourable.

The Sovereigns followed the advanced guard through the villages of Vanjour and Livry, which

they found had been plundered by our light infantry. From thence they turned to the left, and ascended an eminence by a path through brushwood, to the village of Clichy. The sun had just set, and a cool breeze refreshed the air after the heat of the day; there was not a cloud in the sky. All at once, on the right hand, we got a momentary glimpse of Montmartre, and the lofty towers of the capital. "Paris! Paris!" was the instant and general exclamation. Every one kept straining his eyes while pointing out to his neighbour, the huge but indistinct mass rising above the horizon. Forgotten in a moment were the fatigues of the campaign, wounds, fallen friends and brothers, while filled with extasy, we stood on the hill from which Paris was barely visible in the distance. Since that day, more than twenty years have passed away—the personal relations of all of us have suffered many changes—there remains not one of us whose soul has not been afflicted by grievous losses, and the talisman of whose youthful happiness has not been broken; but the remembrance of that memorable scene is still so vivid, that it comes over us with all the freshness of a recent event, making the heart swell with that triumphant exultation which then filled every bosom. If we, simple officers, felt as it were intoxicated with pleasure, what must have been the feelings of the two monarchs—of the one on whom the iron hand of an arrogant conqueror had lain heavy for six long years—and of the other who had so lately wandered alone in the shady solitudes of the isles of the Neva, to conceal the anguish he felt on the fall of Moscow!

Having enjoyed the magnificent prospect spread

out before them, the sovereigns descended the eminence, and went on to the advanced guard, where Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg, and Count Pahlen kept pressing hard on the enemy. Count Langeron, who was marching at the head of the columns of the army of Silesia, had fallen in with the left wing of the French rear-guard at Le Bourgé and Obervilliers, and chased it before him beyond the canal of the Ourcq towards Pantin. The enemy was thus thrown back almost to Paris, and consequently farther than had been expected on that day. For this reason, the Emperor and the King of Prussia, gave up their intention of passing the night at Clichy, and ordered preparations for head-quarters to be made beyond that village at Bondy, the last post station on the road to Paris.

Towards evening, as they approached the capital, the French became more obstinate in their defence, but they were obliged to give way to the generals of our advanced guard. Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg, even reached Romainville; but as Blücher and the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg were not yet come up into line with the Grand army, Prince Eugene received orders to return to Poisy-le-sec, and take post in an interval left for him in the order of battle. At a late hour in the evening when the affair was over, Raiéfsky, perceiving that the enemy had retreated to a considerable distance beyond Pantin and Romainville, and that these villages, lying between the contending armies were unoccupied, sent General Helfreich's division of infantry to take possession of them. This measure of precaution did honour to the military eye of Raiéfsky, as was proved by the great advantage

we derived from it during the combat on the following morning.

On this day, there were none but Russian troops engaged, while the French rear-guard was in a great measure composed of Poles. On the plains of Russia were bleaching the bones of those legions which had conquered Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and Egypt, bearing the Imperial eagles in triumphant procession through every country of continental Europe, and the defence of Paris was now entrusted to foreign bayonets. The Poles indeed might well be considered to be the flower of the enemy's troops. Strange destiny of the Slavonic race ! The united forces of Europe, led by a Slavonic Tsar, were now advancing to the attack of that capital, the conquest of which re-established universal peace, while its defence was entrusted to the sons of a Slavonic tribe !

Raiéfsky's advanced troops were posted at Pantin and Romainville, and his corps at Poisy-le-sec ; the guards and reserves were at Ville-Parisis, the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and Count Giulay at Annet, Blücher with the army of Silesia at Aulnay, Le Bourgé, and Vilepente. From the balcony of the castle of Bondy, where the Emperor halted for the night, were to be seen the countless fires lighted in front of the bivouacs of the allied armies, and on the heights occupied by those of the enemy, whose numbers were this evening increased by the arrival of Marshals Mortier and Marmont ; it was one blaze of light all around.

It was now resolved to attack the enemy at day-break, and, after carrying the heights which commanded

the capital, to offer terms of capitulation. The least delay might give the French generals the means of drawing to their standard the troops scattered around Paris, to fortify, in some measure, the villages and heights, and to arm the national guard; and even Napoleon himself might arrive in time to throw his weight into the scale. Some were inclined to think that the bloodshed would be terrible, and that the inhabitants of Paris would bury themselves under the ruins of their city; others maintained that Paris should not have been defended on the heights of Belleville and Montmartre, but on the banks of the Rhine, and expected a speedy surrender.

In the bivouacs all was now still, and when the arrangements for the attack were completed at headquarters, even there all retired to rest, except Alexander. Could sleep close his eyes on the eve of a day which was to crown his enterprize for the salvation of Europe? The thoughts of all of us were exclusively bent on the subjugation of Paris; but he had to meditate on other, and not less important, subjects, which reposed exclusively on his combinations, and the attainment of which was indispensable to the success of his mighty undertaking. The field of his labours was truly vast; the establishing and ordering of a line of communications with the Netherlands, measures of precaution against the sudden approach of Napoleon, and finally a world of political considerations which must necessarily present themselves on his arrival at Paris. His Majesty spent the greater part of the night in giving the necessary instructions to Prince Volkonsky and Count Nesselrode. Among other things, the latter was commanded to avail himself of the earliest

favourable opportunity for entering into negotiations with the enemy for the surrender of Paris.

With respect to Prince Volkonsky, we shall here give a few of the imperial orders sent round by him in the course of this night. "It is His Majesty's pleasure," he thus wrote to Field Marshal Blücher, "that at five o'clock to-morrow morning you attack Montmartre, and take it. The grand army will attack the heights beyond Romainville. His Majesty is of opinion that the storming of those two points will facilitate the negotiations which he intends to open with Paris. It is further His Majesty's pleasure, that you order General Sacken to send three battalions of infantry to Trilport for the security of the bridges there, and that when the whole of the cavalry and train shall have passed the Marne, to take away two of the bridges, and leave only the third for the passage of the detachment left at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. To secure our communications with the Netherlands, the only road left us is that by Compiègne and La Fère: you will thus see the necessity of losing no time in taking possession of Compiègne, in order to secure the communication in question."

"Our armies are before Paris," writes Prince Volkonsky to the Duke of Weimar: "to-morrow we shall attack, with the hope of success. As our line of communications is now being established on the Soissons and Compiègne roads, it is of the greatest consequence that these should be kept open. General Bülow has been appointed to this service; but as the forces he has now under his orders are insufficient, it is His Majesty's pleasure that, without losing a moment, you should detach General Borstel to his aid, with all the

troops which belong to Bülow's corps. It is likewise the Emperor's wish that you should begin to act vigorously on the offensive, as it is said in the reports of the minister-of-war to Napoleon, which have just been intercepted, that General Maison, having not more than 5000 men under his command, is in great fear of being attacked by you."

Of Napoleon, nothing like credible information was received on this day, the reports brought in contradicting each other; but as it was not natural to think that he was remaining in a state of inaction, the Emperor ordered various routes to be given to our flying detachments. General Chernisheff received orders to send parties through Sens, on the road to Fontainebleau, "it being very possible," as he was told, "that Napoleon, on learning our march, will have made all haste to reach Paris, which it is highly necessary to prevent him from doing." Major-General Ilovâisky (12th,) was ordered to cross to the left bank of the Marne, at the village of Villiers, on the 18th March, and to send parties as far forward as possible along the roads to Lagny, Croice, Tournans, and Brie-sur-Yeres, in order to get the earliest intelligence of Napoleon's motions, it being stated in some reports that he was advancing from Vitry through Sezanne. "Send patrols from the mouth of the Marne up the Seine, along the right bank," wrote Prince Volkonsky to him, "in order to ascertain where the bridges are, and whether the French are putting up new ones, and connect yourself with Major-General Soslavin, with whom you will keep up an uninterrupted communication."

The Prince wrote thus to Soslavin: "It is His Majesty's order, that you not only clear the right bank

of the Seine from Pont-sur-Seine to Melun, but endeavour to act by means of parties along the road from Paris to Fontainebleau to Moret and Nemours. If possible confer with Kaissárof, who is posted at Arcis; and, giving up to him the care of watching the right bank of the Seine, cross over with your whole detachment to the left bank, between Montereau and Paris. There you will act with great advantage, by procuring intelligence of the enemy's movements, if it should be Napoleon's plan to approach Paris on that side. Redouble your watchfulness over the conduct of your detachment, in order not to stir up the people against us: one severe example will suffice to repress disorder."

The true state of the campaign, which the French government had all along carefully concealed in their eternal bulletins of Napoleon's pretended victories, gradually began to be visible to the people of Paris. The inhabitants of the nearest villages fled in search of safety to the capital, where they announced the approach of the numerous allied armies, which the police of Paris was still representing as mere flying parties cut off by Napoleon, and casually drawn on towards Paris. But from the government, properly so called, the real state of matters had not been kept secret, and as soon as Alexander's arrival at Meaux was known on the 16th, the council assembled at the residence of Maria Louisa, and was attended by the chief dignitaries of the empire.

The Minister-at-War laid open the danger which threatened the capital, counted the feeble means in their power for its defence, and stated that Napoleon's speedy arrival was not to be expected. The question was now

put : “ Shall the Empress remain in Paris, or leave it ? ”
The majority were in favour of her staying in the capital ; but Napoleon’s brother Joseph produced a letter from him, in which it was said, that owing to the difficulty of communicating with Paris, he might find it impossible to decide, in proper time, on every case that occurred, but that he should consider it as the greatest misfortune that could befall him, if his son and consort were to fall into the hands of the enemy. He therefore gave it as his positive order, that on the approach of the Allies, the Empress should leave Paris for Rambouillet, and from thence proceed to Tours. As this letter left no room to doubt of Napoleon’s will, the Council unanimously resolved on Maria Louisa’s departure, which accordingly took place on the 17th, in the morning, at the moment Alexander, with the advanced guard, was approaching the forest of Bondy. She was followed by the Ministers, the Members of the Council of State, and the treasure. The seat of Government was removed to the banks of the Loire, and Joseph Bonaparte remained as commander-in-chief at Paris. We cannot resist quoting the words used by a certain dignitary, when speaking of Napoleon after the Council was over : “ Quelle chute ! Donner son nom à des aventures, au lieu de le donner à son siècle ! ” In order completely to prevent every misunderstanding on the part of the Parisians, Prince Schwarzenberg, on this memorable night, and with the approbation of the Allied Sovereigns, addressed the following proclamation to them :—“ Inhabitants of Paris ! The Allied Armies are under your walls. The object of their march to the capital of France is founded on the hope of a sincere and durable pacification with her. For

twenty years Europe has been deluged with blood and tears. Every attempt to put an end to these calamities has proved vain ; for this reason, that in the very government which oppresses you there has ever been found an insurmountable obstacle to peace. Who among you is not convinced of this truth ? The Allied Sovereigns desire to find in France a beneficent Government, which shall strengthen her alliance with all nations ; and therefore, in the present circumstances, it is the duty of Paris to hasten a general pacification. We await the expression of your opinion with a degree of impatience proportioned to the mighty consequences which must result from your determination. Declare it, and it shall at once find defenders in the armies standing before your walls. Parisians ! The state of France, the proceedings of the inhabitants of Bordeaux, the peaceable occupation of Lyons, and the real sentiments of your countrymen, are known to you. In these examples you will find the end of war and domestic discord ; it is to be found no where else. The preservation of your city, and of your tranquillity, shall be the object of the prudent measures, which the Allies will not fail to take, in concert with such of your authorities as enjoy the general confidence. Troops shall not be quartered in the capital. Such are the sentiments with which Europe, arrayed before your walls, now addresses you. Hasten to justify her confidence in your patriotism and prudence.”

CHAPTER VI.

The Allied Army reaches the Neighbourhood of Paris.—Marshals Marmont and Mortier defend the City.—The Emperor Alexander's Interview with a French Prisoner.—Battle of Paris.—Joseph Bonaparte quits Paris.—The French offer to submit.—Montmartre stormed.—Negotiations with the French.—Capitulation of Paris.—Napoleon returns to Fontainebleau.—Caulaincourt sent with full Powers to treat with the Allies.—Evening of the 18th of March.—Order of the Allied Troops on entering Paris.

ON the East side of Paris, by which the Allies approached it, the ground is eminently favourable for defence. The stone houses of the villages, the churches, walls, gardens, ravines, and canals, offer, at every step, natural defences, behind which a small body of troops may successfully keep numerous forces in check. In this quarter are heights of considerable elevation at Romainville and Belleville, standing detached, and commanding the environs. There are also points, for example Montmartre, which were reckoned impregnable, till our double eagle soared over them. In these works, however, nature had received no aid from art. Napoleon, who paid more attention than most other great commanders to the engineer department, and who himself marked out situations for fortresses and field works, descending into the minutest details, had, in this respect, neglected Paris alone. The heights and ham-

lets, adjoining the suburbs of the capital, were not fortified, with the exception of breastworks hurriedly thrown up on Belleville and Montmartre, and a retrenchment near La Villette. These heights were crowned with batteries, which were not brought into position till the Government could no longer doubt of danger being at hand, that is, when the Allied Monarchs had crossed the Marne.

All the troops in the town were led out to the points of attack. They consisted of the skeletons and dépôts of various regiments of the guard and the line, and also of the national guard. These were joined at five o'clock in the afternoon of the 17th by Marshals Marmont and Mortier, who, by skilful forced marches, had escaped the clutches of the advanced guard of the Grand Army, and having crossed to the right bank of the Marne at Charenton, reached Paris at the moment Raziéfsky gained possession of the forest of Bondy. Marmont took the command of the right wing which extended from the Marne, to the canal of the Ourcq. The villagers of St. Maur, Charonne, Bagnotel, Menil-Montant, Belleville, Pré-St. Gervais, and the castle of Vincennes, formed part of his line of defence. Mortier commanded the left wing between the canal of the Ourcq, Montmartre, and Neuilly. The enemy's troops who took part in the defence, the national guards included, amounted to 45,000 men, with 150 pieces of cannon, under the supreme command of Napoleon's brother Joseph. Of the allied armies there were 100,000 men in line.

According to the plan of attack, Raziéfsky, reinforced by the reserves of Count Barclay, was ap-

PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF PARIS.

18th March, 1814.



Drawn by Lt. M. Lefevre, Newman St.

pointed to attack the enemy's centre, that is, the space between Pantin and Vincennes, and especially the heights of Belleville; the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, strengthened by the corps of Count Giulay on the left wing, to carry the bridges of the Marne at St. Maur and Charenton, to clear the wood of Vincennes, and blockade the castle. On the right wing the Silesian army was ordered to advance on Montmartre on two sides; Count Langeron from Clichy and St. Dennis, and Generals Kleist, York, and Count Worontzoff, through the villages of La Villette and La Chapelle. The general onset was fixed for five o'clock in the morning, but Raiéfsky and Count Barclay, as we shall see, alone moved up at the appointed hour. The Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and Count Giulay were still far from the field of battle, and the officer sent to Blücher with the Emperor's order to march out of his camp at five o'clock, lost his way while seeking for a bridge over the canal of the Ourcq, and did not reach the Field Marshal till the fight was raging in the centre, where the Russians fought alone.

Before proceeding to give an account of this battle, we must mention a circumstance which occurred before it began. At day-break, while the Emperor was still at Bondy, an officer of the Parisian national guards was brought before him, who had given himself out as the bearer of a flag of truce, although he had no trumpeter with him. He turned out to be Captain Père of the national guard who had served as Lafayette's aide-de-camp in the outset of the revolution. I was ordered to ascertain whether he had really been sent with a commission, or had merely assumed

an official character, to save himself from captivity. Being half dead with fear, he quickly confessed that he had lost himself in the advanced line, and had stumbled on our patrols. It was certainly of little moment to add one Frenchman more to the two hundred thousand prisoners already in our hands ; but it was of importance to learn from him what was going on in Paris. He told us that Napoleon's adherents were spreading the news of his speedy arrival with his army, and affirming that the allied troops before the capital were nothing more than a corps which he had cut off. "In Paris," continued he, "nobody doubts it." His astonishment may be imagined when he was told that they were a hundred thousand strong, that Napoleon's communication with the capital was barred, and that the Emperor's head-quarters were at Bondy. I now led him to the gates of the mansion, where a company of the regiment of Preobrajensky was posted, and said to him, "There you see His majesty's guards."

The Emperor on hearing of our having made an officer prisoner, ordered him to be introduced, and after conversing with him for half an hour, entrusted him with a declaration addressed to the commander-in-chief of the enemy's troops, that "His Majesty demands the surrender of Paris, that he is before the walls with his whole army, and is not warring with France, but with Napoleon." At this time the fire of the skirmishers in the advanced lines began to be heard. The Emperor now ordered his aide-de-camp Orloff to proceed along with M. Père to the French head-quarters, previously addressing the former as follows : "Go, I empower you to suspend the fire when and where you may think proper. I authorize

you without any responsibility, to stop even the most decisive attacks, and suspend even victory itself. Paris deprived of its defenders and its great man, cannot resist; of that I am fully convinced. But while God has given me power and victory, it is His will that I should employ them to give peace and repose to the world. If we can obtain that peace without a battle, so much the better; if not, let us yield to necessity and fight; for, either with good will or by main force, at the point of the bayonet or in processional march, on ruins or under gilded ceilings, Europe must sleep this very night in Paris."

Orloff set off with the pretended negociator through Pantin, and ordered the skirmishers at that point to cease firing. The trumpeter gave the usual signal, and the Frenchman rode up to the enemy's line, which had given over firing, and concealed himself beyond it. Hardly had Orloff approached within thirty paces, when the French fired a volley, and twenty light dragoons dashed at him and Colonel Diakóff, aide-de-camp to the Cesarévitch. Our officers immediately turned back, pursued by the horsemen who followed them to Pantin where they were made prisoners. Orloff tried to approach the enemy at different points, but was every where fired upon: the combat had now become warm. Thus ended the first attempt at negociation, on conditions which the French did not accept till they were fairly forced to do so. Let us now return to the more serious business of the day.

At the time appointed for the attack, Raiéfsky divided his troops thus: Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg received orders to march on Pantin, and towards

the wood between that village and Romainville which had been occupied the evening before by General Helfreich : Raiéfsky himself, with Gortchakoff's corps and Count Pahlen's cavalry, advanced on the enemy's right flank through Romainville. The French had anticipated these attacks. Convinced of the fault they had committed on the 17th by not keeping possession of Pantin and Romainville which were the keys of their position, they resolved to retake them and were already in full march, at the moment Prince Eugene was approaching Pantin. Divining their intention, the Prince left one division in this village, and with the other advanced to meet the French to an eminence beyond Pantin. He informed Count Barclay of what was going on, by the following note. "The second corps, is ready and willing to be sacrificed : think of us and help us." The commander-in-chief answered, "Many thanks for your resolution ; the grenadiers are prepared to reinforce you." Till the reserves arrived, the prince had, however, to bear alone the brunt of the enemy's fire, and to continue a bloody fight at close quarters in Pantin and Romainville, which cost him 1500 men killed on the spot.

Raiéfsky, having completed his détour, commenced operations on the left wing : his infantry carried Montreuil and Bagnolet, and Count Pahlen's cavalry marched through Montreuil to Charon. These movements checked the impetuosity of the enemy, and weakened his hope of keeping off the allies. At eight o'clock in the morning, the Emperor arrived on the field of battle from Bondy, where he learned the unforeseen accident, owing to which the army of Silesia could not take up its ground at the appointed time, and that the

Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg was not to be expected before the lapse of some hours. These circumstances and the weakness of Raiéfsky's corps, which had difficulty in retaining the position it had occupied, led to two conclusions: first, that the enemy, whose numbers were unknown, might this day, on getting possession of Pantin and Romainville, and the hills between them, present an insurmountable barrier to the carrying of the heights which commanded Paris; secondly, that the appearance of Napoleon, even without an army, in the capital, the centre of his military and political power, would necessarily lead to a still more obstinate defence. Promptitude and decision alone could extinguish the hopes of the enemy, and by defeating the calculations of Napoleon and his generals, crown the arms of the Allies with success. Influenced by these important considerations, the Emperor ordered Count Barclay to bring forward the reserves, and thus decide the fate of the battle. His Majesty's intention had been already carried into execution by the Count, who had ordered the second division of the grenadiers of Paskévitch to reinforce Raiéfsky's left flank, and the first or Tchoglokoff's division, to advance on the height towards the wood between Pantin and Romainville. The Prussian and Baden guards followed them to Pantin, supported by the second division of the Russian guards.

Having thus secured the centre, the Emperor turned his attention to the right wing, on which the Silesian army was destined to act. Owing to the cause we have explained, it was only now leaving the camp, with the exception of Count Langeron, who had marched forward without orders, and for the following reason.

On the day of the battle of Paris, that army was composed of the two Prussian corps of York and Kleist, and of the two Russian corps of Worontzoff and Langeron. His Majesty having sent an order by an aide-de-camp for Count Langeron instantly to advance on Montmartre, this officer met the Count's corps marching towards La Villette. The cause of this isolated movement was, that Count Langeron, who had passed the night at Blanc-Menil, on hearing, in the morning, a heavy cannonade at Pantin, and receiving no orders from Marshal Blücher, whom the Emperor's order of battle had not yet reached, resolved, like an experienced officer, to march with his own troops to the scene of action, that is, to Pantin. While he was executing this movement, Blücher, who had in the meantime received the order of battle, sent him an order to march to La Villette. Count Langeron was preparing to attack that village, when the aide-de-camp reached him with His Majesty's order to direct his column against Montmartre. The Count desired the aide-de-camp to inform His Majesty of the occurrences of the morning, and that he would execute his orders the moment York, Kleist, and Worontzoff, should arrive at La Villette, it being impossible for him to quit this village, which was in the centre of the line of battle, without leaving considerable forces to watch it. As soon however as the troops came up and relieved him at La Villette, the Count set off through Obervilliers for Montmartre.

The arrival of the grenadiers gave a new turn to affairs in the centre. Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg attacked the enemy's left wing, which immediately retired to Pré-St.-Gervais and Belleville: Raïéfsky

checked the advance of the French between the wood and Romainville, and forced them to retire to Menil-Montant and Belleville : Count Pahlen, who was standing on the left of Raiéfsky, on the heights of Rosney, sent a detachment to watch the castle of Vincennes, the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg not having yet come up, and ordered the hulans of Tchugooieff, who had descended into the plain, to approach one of the gates of Paris, called *La Barrière-du-trône*. Twenty pieces of cannon were immediately drawn out of the city against the hulans, and being planted on the road to Vincennes opened their fire ; but the French had hardly fired a few shots, when Major Izéwmof, with a troop of the hulans, made a dash at the battery, and taking it in flank, captured all the guns one after another. The gens-d'armes, who were covering them, fled into the town, at the gates of which was posted a body of the national guards, who checked the pursuit. The appearance of the hulans at the battery was so sudden, that the men who were serving the guns, (consisting chiefly of the students of the polytechnic school,) either from panic or inexperience, not only failed in turning them against the assailants, but even in saving themselves. When these youths were presented to Count Pahlen, two of them requested letters of recommendation for Russia, where they expressed a wish to teach mathematics. Of twenty-eight guns, the hulans brought away nine, which were the first trophies of the battle of Paris. The remaining pieces were abandoned on the spot for want of horses, and because our men were obliged to retreat before a detachment of the national guard, which now came out to attack them.

As soon as the heights between Romainville and Pantin were fairly cleared of the enemy, Count Barclay, who personally directed operations in the centre, ordered the regiments, which for the most part were acting as skirmishers, to form and to remain on the ground they occupied. He was induced to do this by the conviction that on the approach of the Silesian army, and the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, the carrying of Belleville would be attended with a less sacrifice of men and time. He likewise reinforced the infantry with the cuirassier regiments of Astrakhan and Pskoff, which charged the enemy's skirmishers with success, and pursuing them as far as the batteries of Belleville, took a General prisoner. Thus ended the first act of the fight in which neither the right nor the left wing of the Allied armies took part: the Russians alone were engaged. The combat along the whole of the centre was now only kept up by the batteries and skirmishers.

In the course of their numerous campaigns our troops had acquired singular perfection in skirmishing, and proved the injustice of the charge so often made of their inferiority as marksmen to the sharp-shooters of foreign armies. Although in the corps of the line there were many soldiers but newly brought from the reserves, yet, as in the regiments of the armies in activity, to which the recruits were posted, they found themselves side by side with veterans, they, in an almost incredibly short space of time, by dint of daily practice and the natural aptitude of their race, equalled in expertness and coolness those of their comrades who had grown grey in the service. Being almost continually under fire, and accustomed to mea-

sure the length of their campaigns by victories following each other in close succession, they at length became filled with contempt for the French, and of course went into action with full confidence of success.

At eleven o'clock the corps of York and Kleist drew near to La Villette. Their left wing rested on the canal of the Ourcq, and united with the Grand army, while the right of the Silesian army under the command of Count Langeron kept advancing on Montmartre. For more than four hours, the enemy persevered in the defence of La Villette, which was covered by a work which the Prussians long attacked in vain. Count Worontzoff, who was standing in reserve at Obervilliers, sent to La Villette Major-general Krassovsky with the 13th and 14th regiments of light infantry, the foot regiments of Tula and Navaguinsk, and the 1st of the Cossacks of the Bug. Krassovsky opened his attack with a discharge of grape from Lieutenant-colonel Vinspar's company of artillery. The light infantry and dismounted volunteers from the Cossack regiment, with the Tula and Navaguinsky regiments in reserve, charged with the bayonet, carried the battery without firing a shot, forced their way into La Villette, and driving the French out of it, pursued them to the gate of St. Martin, where they received an order to halt. The 13th and 14th regiments of light infantry, those ornaments of the Russian army, were in full parade uniform, having received notice early in the morning of Field-Marshal Blücher's intention to pass them in review. Instead of a review, however, they went straight into battle with their bands, singers, and drums, at their head. The Emperor, who from a hill was gazing with admir-

ation on the gallant bearing of the troops in this part of the field, being struck with the exterior of these two regiments, so unusual on a day of battle, sent to learn their names, and the reason of their gala attire. On the following day, His Majesty sent fifty badges of distinction of the military order to the 13th and 14th light infantry, ten to the Cossacks, and as many to the company of artillery. The commander of the latter, had his hand torn off by a cannon-ball. Though but a Lieutenant-colonel, he was rewarded with the order of St. George of the third class.

While the fight was raging at La Villette, the French once more made a show as if they would attack Pantin. Count Barclay ordered the brigade consisting of the Prussians and Baden guards to march out of that village, and advance to reinforce the skirmishers. As soon as the commander of the brigade, Colonel Alvensleben, had taken up his appointed ground, the French opened a murderous fire upon him. He now requested leave of the Commander-in-Chief to attack the enemy posted between the canal of the Ourcq and Pré-Saint-Gervais. Having received it, he formed his brigade in three columns, and heedless of the cross fire of the French, rushed upon them with a fury like that which the Prussians displayed at Lützen, broke them, and pursued them to the barrier, at the same time taking five pieces of cannon. The particulars of this exploit were reported to the Emperor by Orloff, now count and general of cavalry, who had just returned from the Prussian brigade. His Majesty immediately took the cross of St. George from off the neck of the Grand Duke Constantine, and desired Orloff to present it to Colonel

Alvensleben. This was done while the Prussians were still in the thick of a running fire. On seeing this flattering badge (not less valued by our allies than by the Russians,) bestowed on their commander, they gave a loud hurrah, whose echoes mingled with those of a regular volley.

At length, about one o'clock in the afternoon, the heads of the columns of the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg's corps appeared at Nogent on the Marne. His Highness, agreeably to the plan of attack, formed his troops in two columns on the high ground between Fontenay and Nogent, the reserve consisted of some battalions of Austrians who were in the Prince's corps, for Count Giulay had not yet come up. Both columns entered the wood of Vincennes without encountering much opposition. One battalion was detached to blockade the castle, and the Prince, with the rest of his troops, turned off to the left in the direction of St. Maur, in front of which had been planted eight of the enemy's guns to defend the village and bridge. The Wirtembergers advanced against the battery, stood its fire, and charging with the bayonet, took the eight guns; after which the French retired to Charenton. The Hereditary Prince pursued them partly through the wood, and partly along the Marne, and on approaching Charenton, fell upon the enemy, among whom were the youths of the military school of Alfort. Here he routed them, and forced them into Charenton, which he then stormed, capturing eight guns. All the attempts of the enemy to regain the bridge at this place proved vain. Having got complete possession of the village, the Hereditary Prince sent detachments of horse to the suburbs of St. Anthony. When, with

the exception of Count Langeron, who had not yet reached Montmartre, the right and left wings of the Allied armies had joined in the battle, the time was at hand to make a decisive attack in the centre. The hour was come for striking the blow which was to put an end to the nine years' struggle between Alexander and Napoleon. At this moment, Count Barclay's chief aids were Generals whose names will never die in the Russian army — Milorádovitch and Raiéfsky. The former commanded the reserves, the grenadiers of which were engaged, and a part of the second division of the guards, with the brigade of the Prussian and Baden guards; the latter commanded two corps of troops of the line. These united corps were destined to storm Belleville, which was the last defence of Paris on the east. With this view, Raiéfsky ordered Prince Gortchakoff to begin by taking possession of Charron, and Prince Eugene to carry the village of Pré-St.-Gervais, and the burying-ground of Mont-Louis. Count Milorádovitch led the grenadiers through Tourelle straight on Menil-Montant and Belleville, and Yermóloff, with the second division of the guards, and the Prussian and Baden brigade, marched by the high road through Pantin. The Emperor now sent another order to Count Langeron to carry Montmartre, cost what it might. The thunder of the artillery, and the loud hurrahs of the whole united troops as they advanced, filled the environs of Paris with such a battle-storm as they had not listened to from the earliest times.

The advantageous position of the enemy, and the most desperate defence were not sufficient to check the rush of the assailants. In vain did Marmont and

his Generals try to encourage the regiments by standing in front of the columns and skirmishers, and doing all they could to lead them into action. They exhausted every means of manly resistance and were vanquished. Flashing in the rays of a bright spring sun, the Russian colours were carried forward from one height to another, and in about an hour every obstacle was surmounted. The Emperor had hardly time enough to receive the reports of the trophies won by his troops. Puishnitsky's division first took Pré-St.-Gervais, and seventeen pieces of cannon which had been planted there. Along with it the skirmishers of the Prussian and Baden guards rushed into the place on the right, and captured ten guns. Prince Gortchakoff carried Charron, and the third division, under the command of Prince Shakhoffskoy, the burying-ground of Mont-Louis, and eight guns. The grenadier corps, advancing in a line with the other troops, captured seven guns at Menil-Montant. All the columns under a shower of round shot, grape and musketry, entered Belleville almost at the same time, and pushed their successes to the gates of Paris. All at once they received an order to halt, and to suspend the attack. This order was the result of the following circumstances.

As soon as the heights in front of Belleville were carried, Marshal Marmont saw plainly that he would not be able to keep his ground on the hill of Belleville. The descent from it on the Paris side is so abrupt that it is impossible to retire by it in good order with troops. A retreat would therefore have inevitably become a flight, during which both the

pursued and the pursuers would have rushed into the town together. Wherever Marmont turned his eye, he saw the success of the Allies, who were marching from various directions to the gates: Russian balls too from the batteries at Charron and Menil-Montant, began to fall into the city. To spare the capital the consequences of an assault, he had no resource left save in the moderation of the Allies, with whom he was now obliged to treat. In these circumstances he did not wait till Belleville was completely in our power, but the moment the Russians entered the streets of the village, despatched an officer to the Emperor to request a suspension of hostilities.

To this effect, Marmont had full power from Joseph Bonaparte, given to him in writing on Montmartre soon after mid-day: "If Marshals Mortier and Marmont should not be able to maintain their position, I empower them to enter into a treaty with the Emperor of Russia and Prince Schwarzenberg, who are now before them. The troops to retire behind the Loire."

Joseph had long hesitated to give the Marshals this discretionary power, because he did not believe that the Allied Sovereigns were before Paris with all their forces. Early in the morning he came to Montmartre, and persisted in his belief, while he saw the attack made only by the great road from Meaux. There was an end to his doubts, however, when at eleven o'clock, the Silesian army appeared, and began to deploy on the vast plain of St. Denis. At the same time, the captain of the national guard, who had been a prisoner during the night, appeared before him, and repeated the Emperor's words. Joseph then wrote his

consent for the Marshalls to enter into treaty, and retired from Montmartre to Paris, from whence he set out for Blois to rejoin Maria Louisa.

The Emperor was on the point of ordering the guards to advance, in order to complete the victory, when the French officer appeared. Taking off his hat, he timidly ascended the hill at Romainville, and humbly saluting His Majesty, said that Marmont requested the attack to be suspended till the terms of an armistice should be agreed on. At this moment, Alexander tasted the first fruits of that constancy and firmness which will be associated with his name to the latest posterity. In the midst of the numerous suite which surrounded him, there reigned a perfect silence. All with boundless curiosity awaited His Majesty's answer. Who among us has not the freshest recollection of his meekness, his Christian humility, when allusion was made to his personal glory? Was it not plain to all of us that he considered himself as merely an instrument in the hand of Providence? But the features of the Emperor, his look and mien were illuminated with an indescribable majesty, whenever he spoke of the destiny of nations, and of the interests of humanity: and such were they now. His Majesty answered the officer, that he granted the Marshal's request, and would order the combat to be suspended, on condition, however, that Paris should be surrendered: "otherwise," added he, "by the evening you will not know where your capital stood." As the French officer had no authority to act, and simply prayed that the attack might be suspended, which it was impossible to agree to without losing the fruit of victory, the Emperor ordered his aide-de-camp, Orloff, to accompany the

officer to Marshal Marmont, in order to arrange the preliminary conditions.

In the first line of the enemy's troops, Orloff met the Marshal, who, with his sword drawn, was encouraging his worn-out battalions. "I am the Duke of Ragusa; who are you?" said he.

"Colonel Orloff, aide-de-camp of the Emperor of Russia, who desires to save Paris."

"That is my only wish and hope; we have otherwise nothing left for it but to die on the spot. What are your conditions?"

"Hostilities to be suspended—the French troops to retire within the gates—plenipotentiaries to be instantly appointed to make arrangements for the surrender of Paris."

"Agreed. The Duke of Treviso and I will go to the barrier of Pantin for that purpose. Tell the Allies to cease firing. Good bye."

"Of course you understand that your troops are to evacuate the position of Mortmartre?" said Orloff.

"Certainly," answered Marmont: "Montmartre is without the gates."

The Emperor, having received Orloff's report, commanded the Secretary of State, Count Nesselrode, to proceed to the French army to conclude the truce. He was accompanied by Orloff, Prince Schwarzenberg's aide-de-camp, Count Paar, and Captain Peterson. Officers were sent off in every direction, with orders for the troops to cease firing, and to halt wherever the order should reach them. It was indeed no easy task to carry such orders into effect in the heat of battle: the exasperated soldiers of both armies gave a very unwilling obedience. One of our grenadiers, who was aim-

ing at a Frenchman, and pointing him out to the officer who was forbidding him to draw the trigger, said, "Your honour, allow me just to have a shot at that fellow!" Among the enemy's skirmishers, too, might still be heard a few hoarse voices shouting,—*Vive l'Empereur!* How different from their former cries of victory were these feeble sounds of warriors, whose glory was departed!

Soon after Alexander had pronounced the mighty words of clemency and forbearance, a hundred thousand gallant soldiers suspended the work of destruction. His Majesty now rode on to the hill of St. Chaumont, from which Paris appeared as if spread out on a boundless plain at his feet, and appealing for mercy to his generosity. The armies stood in a semicircle from the Seine to the Marne, and the heights bristled with cannon. The first company of the artillery of the guards had been brought forward to Belleville. Ready for the assault, close columns leaning on their arms, on which French blood was not yet cold, in silent consciousness of their invincibility, waited for orders either to destroy Paris, or to enter it as peaceful victors. The firing had ceased along the whole line, and all was quiet, when suddenly, on the extremity of the right wing, Montmartre was lost in a cloud of smoke, from which issued the roar of artillery and musketry. In half an hour, the Emperor received a report that this fastness had been stormed. We left Count Langeron on his way to Montmartre, after the Prussians and Count Worontzoff had relieved him at La Villette. He marched through Obervilliers to his destination, with the corps of Rudzévitch and Kaptsévitch, and sent the latter to take possession of St Denis. But knowing that this

town was occupied by the enemy, and considering that the troops he had sent thither might be more usefully employed against Montmartre, he annulled his order, recalled Kaptsevitch, and replaced his troops, with a small detachment of observation. In the meantime, he marched on Clichy with a Rudzévitch's corps, and suffered some delay at the passage of the canal of St. Denis. Although there was no water in it, yet the steepness of the banks made it difficult to get the guns over, especially as there were no pioneers in the corps, and as the enemy at St. Denis kept up a cannonade on our columns. As the guns were brought over, they were placed in battery, and answered the enemy's fire, which soon slackened.

Count Langeron approached Montmartre by the road from Clichy, as the attack could only be made from that side of the hill, the other side being perpendicular, and surrounded by gardens, excavations, and quarries. Opposite to the road leading from Clichy, there were works mounted with thirty pieces of cannon, in two lines, one above another. The Count's undertaking was attended with this further difficulty, that during his march, some columns of the enemy issued from La Villette, and followed his movement along the outer side of the suburbs of St. Denis and St. Lazarus. Notwithstanding this, he had begun to form his troops in order of attack, when he received His Majesty's positive order to take Montmartre, and to detach General Emanuel with two thousand horse, to occupy the Versailles road.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, Rudzévitch formed his men in columns, on the road from St. Denis to the Bois-de-Boulogne. His corps consisted of the ten fol-

lowing regiments :—the Yelétsk, Ráisk, Polótsk, Eka-
terinbúrg, Riazàn, Belozérsk, and the 1st, 30th, 33rd,
and 48th light infantry, in all eight thousand men under
arms. The signal being given, the columns moved on,
rending the air with tremendous hurrahs ! A small num-
ber of French, who were posted at the foot of Mont-
martre, perceiving the advance, and being exposed to a
shower of shot and shells, immediately ascended the
hill. The order in which the Russians mounted the
steep side of Montmartre was above all praise. Count
Langeron said, that in the course of a long military life,
during which he had made twenty campaigns, he had
seen nothing to be compared to it, except the storming
of Ismaïl. The men pressed forward with such fury to
gain the summit, that, when the wounded skirmishers
were removed, and reinforcements sent forward to take
their places, it required an exertion of authority to keep
the men from rushing out of the ranks, in order to gain
the advanced line. Rudzévitch, whose fearlessness is
well known, considered the enterprize to be so des-
perate, that before mounting to the assault, he took
farewell of all his brother officers, as one who was sure
never to return alive.

The French had only time allowed them to fire twice
with grape into the columns, the lower battery being
instantly carried. On seeing it in the hands of the
Russians, they made a last discharge from all the guns
of the upper battery. But neither this fire, nor a con-
tinued discharge of musketry from the houses and
works, could shake the steadiness of the assailants.
Exactly in ten minutes all the works and batteries were
carried at the point of the bayonet. Of thirty guns,
twenty-nine were captured, besides sixty ammunition

carts, and one hundred and fifty prisoners. All the rest of the French, refusing to fight with cold iron, fled in disorder to Paris, pursued by the skirmishers, who, however, were ordered to halt, the Emperor having, in the morning, laid it upon the responsibility of the chiefs of corps, that not one soldier should enter the gates of Paris. Our artillery, which, during the assault, was planted at the bottom of Montmartre, having fired several rounds, three balls fell in the most populous part of Paris, called the *Chaussée d'Antin*. General Kaptsevitch, who was in the reserve, emulous of Rudzévitch's prowess, attacked, without orders, the left side of Montmartre, between the hill and the hamlet of La Chapelle, and took several guns close to the barrier. Our loss consisted of two officers and two hundred and fourteen rank and file.

The enemy now sent to inform Count Langeron of the cessation of hostilities, who soon received an order from His Majesty to that purpose, and the news of the negociations for the surrender of Paris. "The French call for quarter! Paris is surrendering!" These words flew like lightning from mouth to mouth among the officers, and were repeated by the men. "So Father Paris! you must now pay for Mother Moscow!" said a soldier, making the sign of the redemption. After some short disputes with the French, Count Langeron placed guards at the issues of Paris, called in the skirmishers who were scattered about the suburbs, posted his troops on the slope of Montmartre, and ordered eighty-four guns to be planted on the top of the hill, and pointed against Paris. When these arrangements were made, the Colonel of the Riazán regiment made the band get upon the very top of a windmill, and play

a march. The music of the other regiments followed the example, and in a moment, from a spot threatening death and destruction, Montmartre was changed into one of rejoicing. White flags were displayed at the gates, or to speak more correctly, tablecloths and napkins fastened to poles, and the populace, in thousands, crowded to the barriers, demanding permission to visit the Russian camp; this favour, however, was granted exclusively to the fair sex.

On receiving the report of the taking of Montmartre, His Majesty ordered Rudzévitch to be saluted Knight of the order of St. George of the 2nd class. With respect to Count Langeron, his recompense was announced in the following manner. A few days after the taking of Paris, the Grand Duke Constantine had the honour to entertain His Majesty at dinner. On seeing Count Langeron, the Emperor asked him if he had lost any thing, adding, that on riding over Montmartre he had found something belonging to him. Count Langeron protested that he had lost nothing whatever. His Majesty, however, insisted that he had, and, handing him an envelope, said: "There is what I found on Montmartre! it belongs to you." The packet contained the ribbon of St. Andrew.

During the assault, the French had tried to make a sally from St. Denis, but were driven back by the detachment of observation. General Emanuel, who had been sent round to the Versailles road, met the enemy at Neuilly, drove them off with grape-shot, and then attacked the national guards at the entrance to the Elysian fields, called the *barrière de l'Etoile*. After firing a few rounds, the news of the truce was brought to him from the town by a French colonel. General

Emanuel did not believe him, not having yet received orders from his superiors on the subject; but, on the arrival of Langeron's aide-de-camp with the confirmation of the intelligence, he retired to Neuilly. Here the national guards, who had been fighting with him but a moment before, did every thing they could to secure good billets for the detachment, and to supply it with every thing the place could afford.

However brilliant, in a military point of view, was the storming of Montmartre, it had no influence on the surrender of Paris. The negociations at the barrier of Pantin were already in full march, and the orders to cease firing had been sent off in every direction when the assault was made. Our commissioners heard from Paris itself the Russian hurrah during the attack, and the French marshals then complained of the non-observance of the promise to suspend hostilities. It was not difficult to satisfy them that this had arisen from the orders sent from Romainville not having reached the troops posted at Montmartre. Nevertheless this exploit, by depriving Paris of her last defence, and delivering her disarmed into the hands of the Allied Sovereigns, is a convincing proof that neither treason nor blind chance, but main force and valour, tore the capital out of Napoleon's hands, and thus laid the axe to the root of his power.

Immediately after the taking of Montmartre, Prince Schwarzenberg issued the following order to the troops: "The Silesian army will occupy Montmartre, the Bois-de-Boulogne, and all the bridges from Neuilly to the city. Raiéfsky's corps will remain on the heights of Belleville and Bagnolet, reinforced by the guards and reserves which will bivouac beyond Pantin and Romain-

ville. The Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg will occupy the wood of Vincennes and the bridge of Charenton: Count Giulay's corps will take post behind him. The whole troops are strictly enjoined to observe the utmost caution and good order."

While the discussions with the marshals for the surrender of Paris were going on, the Emperor remained for some time at Belleville and St. Chaumont. He then rode round the regiments which were standing near him, congratulated them on their victory, and promoted Count Barclay, whose zeal and talents had made the Russian army the wonder of Europe, to the rank of Field Marshal. The warriors of Borodíno, of Culm, and of Leipsic, made the air ring with shouts of welcome to the monarch, whose devoted bands had now mastered all the most difficult points of the defences of Paris, watering them with rivers of blood.

On this day the loss of the allies, in killed and wounded, amounted to 9093 men, of whom 153 were Wirtembergers, 1840 Prussians, and 7100 Russians. The list would not have been so considerable if Blücher had received, in good time, the plan of the attack, which, as we have seen, was intended to be a joint one with Count Barclay's. In that case, the French would have been obliged to distribute their troops over the whole line, and could not have concentrated them exclusively against the Russians, as we have seen they did during the greater part of the morning. Although in the Allied Armies there was a hundred thousand men, and in that of the French only forty-five thousand, the number of those engaged on both sides, from five o'clock in the morning till eleven, was almost

equal; for the army of Silesia came into action but a little before mid-day, and the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg, who had Count Giulay in reserve, did not open his fire before two o'clock in the afternoon. Besides, during the whole time Raiéfsky and Barclay were engaged with Marmont, the advantage of the ground being wholly in favour of the latter, gave him a decided superiority. It is, therefore, idle boasting on the part of the French, when they assert that a hundred thousand allied troops, after fighting a whole day, could hardly vanquish forces not more than half their number. Had the whole hundred thousand taken part in the battle, they would in a very short time have decided the victory, which, gained as it was, gave us the field of battle, eighty-six pieces of cannon, two pairs of colours, a thousand prisoners, and finally Paris itself.

Let us now return to the negociations which preceded the capitulation of Paris. Count Nesselrode and the officers who accompanied him, were received by Marshal Marmont on the outside of the barrier of Pantin, beyond which the French troops had already retired into the city. Mortier had not yet arrived. The cause of his tardiness was plain enough: to him who had lately blown up the Kremlin, it could not be very pleasant to hasten to a conference for the surrender of Paris. Marmont proposed that they should ride on to meet him by the road to La Villette. On meeting, both Marshals turning aside, exchanged a few words, and then the whole party entered a small house where the negociations were immediately opened. On the part of the French,

they were conducted by Marmont alone ; his associate kept silence for the most part, and expressed his assent or disapprobation by nods.

Count Nesselrode proposed that Paris should capitulate with all the troops it contained. The Marshals did not oppose the occupation of the capital by the Allies, but on no account whatever would they agree to lay down their arms. They appealed to their long service and to the numerous battles in which they had taken part, and added that they would rather perish than sign such a condition. Various arguments were brought forward to shake their resolution, such as political considerations, the saving of the capital, and their responsibility, if the consequence of their obstinacy should be the storming of Paris ; but it was all in vain. Even the storming of Montmartre which took place during the conference could not shake their resolution not to become prisoners of war. Count Nesselrode seeing them inflexible, found it necessary to return to His Majesty to request new powers. General Lapointe was ordered to accompany him and to bring the ultimatum of the sovereigns. At the same time he was entrusted with a letter addressed by Napoleon to Prince Schwarzenberg which had just been received, and in which he informed the Field Marshal that peace was on the eve of being concluded with the Emperor of Austria, and requested him as commander-in-chief, to suspend the attack on Paris.

This letter had been handed to Marshal Mortier by one of Napoleon's General-aide-de-camps along with an order to hold out for a few hours till the Emperor should arrive. With respect to Napoleon's communi-

cations with the Emperor Francis, it is known that on his way from St. Dizier to Paris, he despatched proposals of peace to his father-in-law, but he had not yet received an answer to them; consequently the letter to the Marshals expressing a hope of a speedy pacification, was on the part of Napoleon nothing but a cunning device to keep Paris in his own hands. Instead of resorting to this trick, why did not Napoleon himself, on seeing the imminent danger of his capital, hurry to Paris, whither the road was open to him, as was proved by the uninterrupted journey of the General who had just arrived? Was it that the weight of years, or the want of success in this campaign, or a presentiment of his approaching fall had unmanned him to such a degree, that he who had once quitted Egypt on board a leaky vessel to make his way through the English cruizers which then covered the Mediterranean, would not venture to travel a hundred versts without an escort, in order to appear on the spot where his fate was to be decided?

The Emperor and the King of Prussia having perused this letter on the hill of St. Chaumont decidedly refused to pay any attention to it. Prince Schwarzenberg answered Mortier by letter that the inviolability of the alliance between the sovereigns was a pledge of the non-existence of negotiations for peace with the court of Austria. In conclusion he forwarded to Mortier the appeal to the inhabitants of Paris which had been published the evening before, at the head-quarters of the Allies.

At seven o'clock, Count Nesselrode was again sent to the barrier of La Villette, with orders not to insist on the French troops being considered prisoners of

war. With the view of weakening Napoleon, by preventing the corps in Paris from joining him, the Marshals were now told that they might retire, but only by the road which the Allies should appoint. "Whither would you have us march?" asked Marmont. "By the road to Bretagne," was the answer. Marmont replied that Paris was not surrounded, and that consequently the troops might retire in various directions: and that if they were to defend Paris inch by inch, nothing could hinder them from crossing the Seine to the Faubourg-St.-Germain, and retreating on Fontainebleau, the road to which was open. "Fortune has favoured you," added he, "your success is certain; be at once magnanimous and moderate, and do not push your demands to extremity."

It was not thus that Milorádovitch spoke under the walls of Moscow, in a situation far more difficult than that of Mortier and Marmont. His rear-guard was still in advance of the town, while the French army was rapidly approaching the gates. *He* never talked of terms for securing his retreat, nor bargained with the enemy about a road to retire by, never counted his exploits nor the battles in which he had fought, nor appealed to the generosity of his enemies. He merely ordered the King of Naples to be told, that if the advance of the French were not instantly stopped, he would set fire to the town and bury himself under its ruins. Napoleon who was then with Murat, complied with Milorádovitch's demand, and not only our rear-guard, but the immense mass of troops and baggage which then encumbered the streets of Moscow, quitted the town unmolested.

The Marshals would not agree to take the road to Bretagne, and the discussion was prolonged to no purpose. Mortier at length said, that he must return to his troops, and left the decision to Marmont, who, remaining alone, kept firmly to his purpose. The evening was drawing on, and the capitulation was not yet concluded, while the darkness, by preventing us from renewing the attack, would enable the French troops to retire by whatever road they chose. For these reasons, Orloff remained with the enemy, by way of hostage, till the renewal of hostilities, and Count Nesselrode again interrupting the negotiations, returned to the Emperor, to receive his ultimatum; but His Majesty, having, in the mean time, retired to Bondy, the Count there received authority for Orloff, who had entered Paris along with Marmont, finally to arrange the terms of capitulation, without insisting on prescribing a route to the enemy's troops. Within a quarter of an hour Orloff drew up the articles of capitulation, which were signed, after Marmont had read them aloud, pausing at almost every word, as if wishing to learn the opinions of the crowd of persons of various ranks and professions, who were then assembled at his house.

The following was the substance of the capitulation : 1st. The Marshals to evacuate Paris, with their corps, on the following morning, by seven o'clock.—2nd. Hostilities not to recommence till two hours after the French should have quitted the city.—3rd. The arsenals and magazines to be given up in the state they were at the signing of the capitulation.—4th. The national guards and the gendarmes to be separated from the troops of the line, and at the pleasure of the Allies, to be either disbanded, or employed as before,

on garrison duty, and the service of the police.—5th. The wounded and stragglers found, after ten o'clock in the morning, to be considered as prisoners of war.—6th. Paris is confided to the generosity of the Monarchs.

The surrender of Paris, and the articles relative to the troops, were accurately defined by the capitulation, but nothing was settled with respect to the future destiny of the city, for which reason a deputation from it was appointed to wait on the Emperor. A good deal of time was spent before the deputies got ready, and the day was beginning to dawn as they proceeded along the road to Bondy, in the midst of the Russian bivouacs, which now presented a most animated picture ; the soldiers, after their short repose, beginning to rise by the light of innumerable fires. When the deputation had reached its destination, and Orloff, who had accompanied it, had entered His Majesty's apartment, the Emperor's first question was,—“ What news have you brought me ?”

“ The capitulation of Paris.”

His Majesty having read it through, and minutely questioned his aide-de-camp as to what had passed in Paris, embraced him, and congratulated him on the signature of so important a document.

The Marshals had already agreed to surrender the capital, but the capitulation was not yet signed, when Napoleon arrived at the village of Juvisy, at the distance of fifteen versts from his good city of Paris, in which he dared not now show his face, the once proud city having changed masters. On returning from Vitry, he became at length convinced of the true direction of the Allies : he therefore advanced, by forced marches, through Doulevante, to Troyes and Sens. At Dalan-

court, on the Aube, he received a report of the passage of the Allies at Meaux, of their advance to Claye, and that Marmont and Mortier despaired of being able to make head against them. In this extremity, Napoleon had recourse to his father-in-law, and sent him a letter, the contents of which have never been made public. At the same time he despatched a General-aide-de-camp to Paris, with an order to hold out till his arrival, and with the lying assertion of his having entered into negociations with Austria, and of the speedy conclusion of a separate peace with that Power. Close after him he sent General Girardin to excite the troops and the inhabitants to prolong the defence, and verbally ordered the powder magazine, on the plain of Grenelle, to be blown up. Had this murderous order been carried into execution, the destruction of an incalculable number of the inhabitants must have been the consequence ; but the officer in charge of the powder, Colonel Lescaur, demanded a written order, which General Girardin had not to give him. At the present day, when the so-called *Young Literature* is accustomed to lavish eulogy on Napoleon, and to represent that scourge of humanity as a model of goodness, his panegyrists affect to doubt the truth of this fact ; yet, at the time we are speaking of, it was well known to all Paris, and the particulars were learned by many of us from Colonel Lescaur himself, who was rewarded by the Emperor Alexander with the Diamond Cross of the Order of St. Anne, of the Second Class.

Two hours after the departure of General Girardin, Napoleon reached Vandœuvres, where he learned that Lyons was in the hands of the Austrians. It seemed, indeed, as if on that day, the 17th of March, he were

destined to receive blow after blow. There was now no time to lose in vain combinations. After taking a few hours' repose at Troyes, he hurried off early in the morning of the day of the battle of Paris. At first he was attended by an escort of cavalry, but, in his anxiety to reach the capital, he ordered the detachment to halt, and, with a few confidential persons, took post at Villeneuve, while his army, to which we shall soon return, followed him in the direction to Sens. The nearer he approached to Paris, the true state of his affairs became better known to him. At one post-house, he learned the departure of his wife and son to Rambouillet; at another, that the Allies had closed up to Paris on different sides, and at Fontainebleau that the Russians had attacked the hill of Romaineville. "*Napoleon presse lui-même les postillons, les roues brulent le pavé,*" says an eye-witness. It was all in vain. The loss of time was irreparable; the decree of fate had gone forth against him!

At ten o'clock at night, at Juvisy the last post station, Napoleon met the advanced troops on their way from Paris. From them he learned the events of the fatal day, and that his entrance into Paris was forbidden. In the first moments of his dissatisfaction, he wanted to go on to Paris, and defend it with the troops still remaining there, the national guards, and the armed inhabitants; but he soon yielded to the force of the representations of the generals around him, who laid before him the ruinous consequences of so desperate a resolution. Having given an order for the troops to halt at Essonné, he sent Caulaincourt to the emperor with full powers to agree to all the offers which were made to him at Châtillon, and then re-

turned to Fontainebleau, where he remained a silent witness of the triumph of Alexander in Paris.

Very different from the aspect of Juvisy was that of the castle of Bondy on this memorable night. At the former lay the vanquished, at the latter the victors. There lay fortune at the last gasp, while here was the fullest confidence of the successful termination of a war unparalleled since the invention of fire-arms. It only remained to take possession of Paris, for which purpose arrangements were now made. The following orders were given to the troops :

1. Count Pahlen, to march early in the morning by the bridge of Austerlitz along the road to Fontainebleau, following Mortier and Marmont.

2. At half-past nine, the following troops to be in readiness between the suburbs of Pantin and St. Martin, to enter Paris in this order, viz : the guards, grenadiers, and cavalry of the corps of reserve, wholly Russian, with the exception of a few weak battalions of the Prussian and Baden guards, and Austrian grenadiers.

3. None of the other corps to enter Paris, but to encamp around it, and to mount guard at the gates and certain places in the city, till they should be relieved by the Imperial guards and the grenadiers.

It was no easy matter for the troops of the line to comply with this order. There was such a scarcity of uniforms and shoes, that out of Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg's entire corps, it was hardly possible to pick out a thousand men decently enough clothed and shod for this duty. In their exterior, Raiéfsky's troops had more the look of Frenchmen than Russians, as the

men, on joining from the reserves in grey jackets, had lost no time in exchanging them for French uniforms, which they stripped from the backs of the killed and prisoners. With respect to the guards, grenadiers and cavalry of the reserve, these troops notwithstanding two long and wasting campaigns, had been kept by the Emperor in the highest state of order and equipment, in proof of which we may cite the opinion of the English general, Stewart, now Marquess of Londonderry. "It is impossible by any description to give an exaggerated idea of the perfect state of these troops; their appearance and equipment were admirable; and when one considered what they had endured, and contemplated the Russians, some of whom had emerged from the steppes of Tartary, bordering the Chinese Empire, traversed their own regions, and marched in a few short months, from Moscow across the Rhine, one was lost in wonder, and inspired with a political awe of that colossal power."*

The victorious troops marched into the capital of France in the following order :

Prussian cavalry of the guards,

Light-horse division of the guards.

Austrian grenadiers.

Russian grenadier corps.

Russian infantry of the guards : viz : the second division of the Russian guards, the Prussian and Baden guards, and the first division of the Russian guards.

Third, second, and first divisions of Russian cuirassiers, with the artillery.

* Narrative of the war in Germany and France, in 1813 and 1814 by the Marquess of Londonderry. Chap. 15. p. 254.

Every necessary preparation was made to meet a day unrivalled in history, and we may say, without fear of exaggeration, that never was the rising of the sun waited for with greater impatience, than during the night previous to the triumphant entrance into Paris.

CHAPTER VII.

Alexander's entrance into Paris, and his stay there.—His designs throughout the Campaign.—Sacken appointed Governor-General of Paris.—Napoleon deprived of the Throne by a decree of the Senate.—Last movements of the French army.—Napoleon abdicates, and is to retire to Elba.—Expression of Public Opinion towards Alexander.—Results of the Campaign.—Conclusion.

AT day-break on the morning of the 19th March, the Generals and Officers of His Majesty's suite, began to descend into the broad court before the castle of Bondy. Soon after, arrived the deputies of the municipality of Paris in their state carriages. They were followed by a man on horseback, who was well known to us all; it was Caulaincourt, sent by Napoleon with an offer to accept the terms he had rejected at Châtillon. The soldier of the Preobrajensky regiment, who was standing sentry, told him he must dismount, and the French Minister was obliged to comply. On seeing the officers assembled in the court, he took off his hat, and with downcast eyes passed by us. Being requested to engage him in conversation till his arrival should be announced to the Emperor, I requested him to walk into the castle; and here I frankly confess that it was not without a feeling of satisfaction that I beheld the humiliation of this upstart, who, notwith-

standing his sincere attachment to the Emperor Alexander, and his persevering efforts to dissuade Napoleon from the war with Russia, had set no bounds to his overbearing pride while he was Ambassador at St. Petersburg. The Emperor now passed more than an hour with him; yet from his troubled air on quitting the audience chamber, it was possible to see that his offers had been rejected. Precisely at eight o'clock, the Emperor mounted his horse. On the road he came up with the King of Prussia, and a little way farther with the guards. No pen is able to describe the enthusiasm with which he was hailed by the soldiers. At the distance of three versts from the gates appeared the Parisians, all asking one question: "Where is the Emperor Alexander?"

The immense edifices of Paris gradually came fully into view. Some of our officers had rode into town early in the morning, with orders of different kinds, and, on their return, excited, by the accounts they gave of it, the general eagerness to be in the capital. All were burning with impatience to enter a city which had so long assumed the right of giving law to the world in matters of taste and fashion; in which were unrivalled treasures of art and science, and from which issued those oppressive regulations which had weighed down so many nations. To crown their two years' series of victories, nothing was wanting to the Russians but the triumphant possession of the French capital; for, till that consummation, it was impossible not to feel that public justice had not been satisfied, that our offended national dignity had not been avenged, and that a full equivalent had not been obtained for an unparalleled expenditure of blood and treasure. But another half

hour's fighting, and the mighty Empire, which had extended from the Baltic to the Tagus, shaken to its very foundations, and tottering to its fall, might have presented to the gazer's eye but a huge mass of crumbling ruins.

At nine o'clock in the morning we reached the suburbs, where a countless multitude crowded the streets, and the roofs and windows of the houses. At first it seemed as if the inhabitants were still under the influence of fear, for their acclamations were not general. This continued for a few minutes, during which they kept continually asking us and one another, "Where is the Emperor?" "There he is,—there is Alexander," exclaimed they. "How graciously he nods to us; with what kindness he speaks with us!" "I am not come among you as an enemy," said His Majesty. A Frenchman saying, they had long been looking for the Emperor's arrival," His Majesty replied, "I should have been sooner here, but for the bravery of your troops." The French, who had pictured to themselves the Russians as worn out, by long campaigns and hard fighting, as speaking a language altogether unknown to them, and dressed in a wild outlandish fashion, could hardly believe their eyes, when they saw the smart Russian uniforms, the glittering arms, the joyous expression of the men, their healthy countenances, and the kind deportment of the officers. The sharp repartees of the latter, in the French language, completed their astonishment. "You are not Russians," said they to us, "you are surely emigrants." A short time, however, served to convince them of the contrary, and the report of the, to them incredible, accomplishments of the conquerors, flew from mouth to mouth. The praises of the

Russians knew no bounds ; the women from the windows and balconies welcomed us, by waving their handkerchiefs and from one end of Paris the cry of “ Long live Alexander ! Long live the Russians ! ” was uttered by a million of voices.

We passed through the suburbs of Montmartre, and turned off to the left along the Boulevards, where the crowd soon became prodigious : indeed, it was hardly possible to make one’s way on horseback. The inhabitants kept constantly stopping our horses, and launching out in praise of Alexander ; but they rarely alluded to the other Allies. Emboldened by the affability of the Emperor, they began to wish for a change of government, and to proclaim the Bourbons. White cockades appeared in the hats, and white handkerchiefs in the air ; not a few of the people crowded round His Majesty, requesting that he would remain in France. “ Reign over us,” said they, “ or give us a Monarch like yourself.”

Continuing our march in front of rows of magnificent buildings, and monuments erected to perpetuate the glory of the French arms, we at length reached the Elysian Fields, where the Emperor halted, and reviewed the troops which marched past him. Hither the Parisians rushed from every quarter, to witness so novel a spectacle. The women requested us to dismount, and allow them to stand on the saddles, in order to have a better view of the Emperor. The march was opened by the Austrians, between whose ranks the people crowded, in spite of the utmost efforts of the gendarmes ; but the moment the Russian grenadiers and foot-guards appeared, the French were so struck with their truly military exterior, that they did not re-

quire even to be told to clear the way : all at once, as if by a secret unanimous consent, they retired far beyond the line traced for the spectators. They gazed, with silent admiration, on the guards and grenadiers, and allowed that their army, even at the most brilliant epoch of the Empire, was never in such order as were these two corps, after our three immortal campaigns. The review ended about five o'clock in the afternoon, when His Majesty retired to the house of M. Talleyrand, in which he resided during the early period of his stay at Paris. A part of the troops mounted guard, and the rest took up the quarters assigned them in the town.

A few hours after the occupation of Paris, a proclamation, signed by the Emperor Alexander, was issued, in which His Majesty invited the French to choose an interim Government, and announced, that neither he nor the Allies would enter into treaty with Napoleon, or the members of his family. Thus was at last embodied in words an idea which the Emperor had long cherished for the good of mankind ; an idea which had not taken its rise in the intoxication of victory, when he had every chance of success on his side, but in those days of trial when Napoleon, at the head of the armies of three-fourths of Europe, was desecrating the Kremlin with his presence. At the most fatal crisis of the war of 1812, when the existence of his empire seemed to hang by a thread, Alexander said, “ I or Napoleon, he or I, but together we cannot reign.” The campaigns in Germany and France were nothing but the development of this idea, an effort to carry it into execution. This is the key to the Emperor's pressing instances not to make peace with him, who had destroyed

the balance of power, and deluged Europe with blood, while sacrificing millions of men on the altar of his caprice.

While the war was going on in Germany, it was too early to give utterance to wishes or intentions of pulling down Napoleon. Premature discussion of such a nature might have interrupted the harmony of a coalition, whose force consisted in unity of purpose and action. But France once invaded, the object of His Majesty began to unfold itself; but gradually, for it was impossible all at once to shake the conviction, which, during a long course of years, had taken firm hold of the minds of the allies, of Napoleon's invincibility, and which was become indeed a rooted prejudice of cabinets and nations.

While speaking on so important a subject, the like of which will vainly be sought for in modern history, the reader has a right to doubt the accuracy of speculative conclusions, and to call for proofs. We shall find these in the emperor's own words which have been already cited in the course of this work, but which it may not be amiss to repeat here in an abridged form. After the passage of the Rhine, there arose at Langres, for the first time, misunderstandings as to the aim of the war, and the question came to be put, "Should the war be continued, or should the Allies rest satisfied with the successes already obtained?" In the opinions which His Majesty communicated to the allied cabinets, it is said, "If Providence should turn circumstances, and even Napoleon himself, into engines for the destruction of his political existence, it would neither be contrary to justice nor to the interests of Europe."

These words may be considered as the first step towards the solution of the question of Napoleon's fate. In the month of February, when formal discussions took place at Troyes, the Emperor's opinion was expressed in still more explicit terms. "I do not share," says he, "the opinion of the Allies on the greater or less degree of importance, attached by them to the overthrow of Napoleon, if it can be justified by prudence. On the contrary, I look on this measure as the completion of the deliverance of Europe, as the brightest example of justice and morality which it is possible to give to the world." Ten days afterwards, during the retreat from Troyes to Chaumont, the Emperor said to the English secretary of state, Lord Castlereagh, "I will not make peace with Napoleon while he is on the throne." At last, immediately on entering Paris, when events had sufficiently ripened, the Emperor pronounced the decisive sentence. The declaration then issued by him drew a well defined line between the past and the future, and gave a totally new view to affairs; for till then the allied sovereigns had kept firm to their principle of abstaining from measures tending to change the reigning dynasty of France.

The mob now began to insult the monuments which had been erected in honour of Napoleon; but the majority of the inhabitants still seemed lost in wonder, as if not believing what they saw with their eyes, and kept asking each other if it were really true that their conquerors were enlightened and compassionate. "Is it possible," asked they, "that Alexander can limit his triumph to securing the happiness of the country he has subdued?" Evening

at length came to give that repose which was equally necessary to the victors and the vanquished; the streets were gradually thinned of their crowds, and a general stillness ensued which was the more sensible, that during the course of the preceding days every breast had been agitated by a throng of hopes and wishes which had been crowned by the most fortunate events. All we saw and felt was so fully equal to our expectations, that the consummation of our happiness was perfect.

Night fell. Near the house where the Emperor had taken up his abode, was posted the first battalion of the regiment of Preobrajensky, of which His Majesty's company occupied the yard. A solemn silence now reigned in the noisy capital, and so perfectly were the rules of discipline observed by the army, that no disorder was heard of, although 50,000 foreign troops passed the night in the city. Not a sound was heard in the streets save the call of the Russian sentries.

On the following day the delirium of joy was universal in Paris. With the first rays of the sun a vast crowd of people assembled in the *rue St. Florentine*, the *place de Louis XV*, and the garden of the Tuileries, which lay close to the house occupied by the Emperor, all thirsting after political news. Accustomed to receive printed news by means of which each of the ephemeral governments, existing from the beginning of the revolution had endeavoured to bring over the people to its side, they collected in crowds before our windows, begging us to distribute bulletins among them. On this occasion their curiosity was highly reasonable, as they might

hope to find in such advertisements the decree of their fate.

Several proclamations were now issued in the name of the Emperor alone, bearing on them the impress of the lofty sentiments of Alexander. Notwithstanding the moderate and even modest language in which they were couched, they breathed the accents of the conscious leader of banded Europe. The prefect of police Pasquier, and Chabrel prefect of the department of the Seine, announced to the inhabitants that the French troops had been obliged to yield to the superior numbers of the allied armies, that all further opposition on their side would have been ruinous, and that the necessary consequence was the surrender of Paris. The following are their own expressions. "Safety of person and property has been guaranteed by the Emperor of all the Russias, who was pleased this morning to assure the municipal authorities of his protection and favour to the inhabitants of the capital." It is thus plain that nobody but the Emperor gave the Parisians full assurance of the only blessings left to the vanquished—life and property.

The secretary of state, Count Nesselrode, announced His Majesty's commands to the prefect of police, for the discharge of all persons confined in the prisons, on real or pretended charges of having hindered the peasants from firing on our troops, and of being devoted to the cause of the Bourbons. But we shall see, in the sequel, that the Emperor's protection was equally accorded to the adherents of Napoleon. While thus befriending all classes of the inhabitants, he steadily refused to interfere in the affairs of private people, and

ordered the numerous persons who came to him with petitions to be told, that being in France merely for the re-establishment of peace and happiness, His Majesty had laid it down as a rule, to interfere in no respect whatever with the ordinary course of the laws, and therefore requested the petitioners to have recourse to the *interim* government, or to the courts of justice entitled to take cognizance of their affairs.

The Russians, Austrians, Prussians, and French, furnished each a commandant of Paris, and Sacken was appointed Governor-General. It would, indeed, have been difficult to select, for this important situation, an officer better fitted to inspire the inhabitants with respect for the Russian name, by his perfect knowledge of the world, the firmness of his character, and the urbanity of his manners. The high dignity to which he was now elevated, was the well-earned reward of his exploits in the preceding campaigns. On entering on his functions, he gave positive orders that nobody should be molested for political opinions, or for any outward marks of distinction he might wear. By maintaining the strictest discipline among the troops, and good order in the capital, he gained the attachment of the Parisians to such a degree, that wherever he went he was received with clapping of hands. On his appearance, shouts of "Long live General Sacken!" resounded on every side. If he happened to visit the theatre, after the raising of the curtain, the spectators ordered the actors to recommence the piece. The following order, issued by him, will serve to prove the principles by which he governed the city committed to his care. "Having inspected the temporary hospital established in the suburbs of Roule, I have to offer the

directors and officers my warmest thanks, for their exertions to alleviate the sufferings of brave soldiers. I was deeply affected by the gratitude expressed by the sick towards those to whose care they are entrusted. May Heaven too bless the people who aid the sick and wounded without distinction of country ! ”

On the second day after the occupation of Paris, theatrical representations recommenced, the post-office resumed its wonted activity, and some hundred thousands of foreign letters were despatched or delivered, which had been detained for three years. The city gates were opened, and all who chose allowed to leave the town, the roads in the neighbourhood of the capital were rendered safe, and in a very short time the bank resumed its payments of the interest of the national debt and the pensions. In short, every possible measure was taken to re-establish the general tranquillity ; the inhabitants were even invited to present petitions for redress of the grievances inseparable from the quartering of troops.

Nobody could have imagined that Paris would be treated so mildly ; for the injury done by the French to each of the allies had been so sensible, and their conduct in the conquered capitals so insulting, that every species of revenge on our part might have been considered pardonable. Such lenity had its source in the lofty principles of the Emperor Alexander. To him alone is to be ascribed this triumph of clemency, which has shed an undying glory over the Russian name. At a subsequent period, I had more than once an opportunity of hearing him lay it down as a maxim, “ that harsh measures should never be used to gain an end.” Agreeably to this principle, he generally made

choice of means, which not only armed nobody against him, but, on the contrary, gained him the hearts of those whose opinions were at variance with his own.

The Senate, under cover of the proclamation issued in the Emperor's name, on the day of the occupation of Paris, pronounced a decree depriving Napoleon of the throne, and the public functionaries lost no time in giving their adherence to it. When the Senators appeared before the Emperor, His Majesty gave them the following answer, which was received with unfeigned enthusiasm : " A man who called himself my ally, invaded my Empire in the most unjust manner. For this reason I am waging war with him, and not with France. I am the friend of the French. Your present act, by which you have deprived Napoleon and his family of the throne, will serve as an additional bond of union between me and you. Good sense demands that a government should be established in France on foundations at once solid, and in harmony with the actual civilization of the country. My allies and I will protect the freedom of your discussions." After a moment's pause, His Majesty continued : " As a proof of the stable connexion which it is my intention to establish with you, I restore you all the French prisoners now in Russia. The interim government has already presented a request to me with respect to them, but I make this concession to the Senate in consideration of the decree you have this day pronounced."

The Senate ordered these words to be inserted in the journals, and to be published for public information, which was immediately done by means of the newspapers and printed bulletins, posted on the walls of the houses. " Let us express our eternal grati-

tude," said one of the courts of law, "for the most noble act of generosity to be found in the annals of the world. The Emperor of all the Russias is about to heal the wounds of two hundred thousand families, by restoring freedom to the unhappy Frenchmen whom the fortune of war had placed under his power. His Majesty is hastening the happy moment, in which we shall see our brothers, friends, and sons."

As the war did not end with the taking of Paris, we must now recount the last events which preceded the peace.

The French army advanced, by forced marches, from Troyes, and concentrated at Fontainebleau. General Wintzengerode, who had been charged to observe it, was, after his defeat at St. Dizier, driven off towards Bar-le-Duc, and his advanced guard to Vitry. Being joined by it at Chalons, he marched after Napoleon, but with difficulty overtook his rear-guard. Close to the French, there remained only Chernisheff, who was at Eclaron during the combat at St. Dizier, and afterwards, when Napoleon took the road to Paris, kept a-head of him to Chavange, Pongy, and Piney, as he had the year before, after the battle of Leipzic, got the start of him on the road to the Rhine. Beyond Piney he could no longer form the advanced guard of the French; for this reason, that their route lay through Sens, which was fortified and defended by a garrison. If Chernisheff had continued his march on Sens, he would have placed himself between that town and the whole French army, which was following at his heels. This would only have been an idle bravado, as he had already executed the commission given him by His

Majesty, which was, to send him correct information of the true direction in which Napoleon was moving.

As soon, therefore, as there was no doubt that Napoleon was hastening to the capital, General Chernisheff, having sent in his report, retired from the great road towards Arcis and Mery. This movement of a detachment of cavalry, whose force was unknown to the French, led them to conclude that the allied cavalry was crossing to the right bank of the Seine, and that they themselves might continue their march to Paris without hindrance. As soon as Chernisheff had allowed the enemy to pass him, he marched on Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, after the rear-guard, on which he made several successful attacks. But not satisfied with these partial successes, he turned aside to Villeneuve-le-Roi, in order to outflank Napoleon, and stand on his new line of communications between Paris and Orleans. He then crossed the Yonne, and advanced to the river Ouanne. Finding no bridge over the river, he ordered the ammunition to be taken out of the cases, and carried by hand above the surface of the water, which was so deep as to wash over the carts. Having successfully accomplished the passage, our detachment marched to Malesherbes, where it met a transport of twenty-two French guns, on the way to Orleans, and covered by seven-hundred horse and foot. These were instantly attacked, routed, and made prisoners, and the guns captured. This exploit was the last of the long series of successes which had crowned the Russian arms from the time we resumed the offensive at Taróotina till we planted our eagles in the heart of France. Chernisheff had thus the honour of firing the last shot near the banks of the

Loire, as he had fired the first on the left bank of the Niéman. He then occupied Etampes, and cut off the communications between Fontainebleau and Blois ; that is, between Napoleon and the town in which were Maria Louisa, the brothers of the ex-ruler of France, and the chief dignitaries of the state.

Napoleon posted his army, in number about fifty-thousand, at Fontainebleau ; the advanced guard, under the command of Marmont, occupying Essonne. The Allied Armies, with the exception of the guards, which remained at Paris, marched to a position between Lonsjumeau and Juvisy, where they remained for upwards of a fortnight, in order of battle, every precaution being taken against any attempt on the part of Napoleon. With respect to him, it is known, that during the first days of his stay at Fontainebleau, he meditated various projects for continuing the war. At first he thought of attacking Paris ; then he resolved to retire behind the Loire, and unite with Augereau and Soult ; finally, he wanted to cross the Alps into Lombardy, to join the Viceroy of Italy, in order to establish himself in a country in which he had reaped his first harvest of military glory. But, on cooler reflexion, he became convinced that the measures he contemplated could only prolong the war for a short time, but were not sufficient to restore his lost power ; especially, as at this time circumstances were occurring around him which daily diminished his hopes. Thus the edifice of his power, which had been so hastily reared, having no moral principle for its foundation, fell, with one crash, to the ground.

Conforming to the decree of the Senate, depriving Napoleon of the throne, Marshal Marmont, with his corps, left the French army, and retired within the line

of the allied troops. His example was followed by a vast number of officers and men, who appeared at our advanced posts, requesting passports to return to their homes. All these circumstances shook the firmness of the Marshals and Generals, who were at Fontainebleau, and rendered Napoleon's situation altogether hopeless. Seeing no further possibility of farther opposition, he sent Caulaincourt, Ney, and Macdonald, to Paris, with an offer to resign the throne to his son. Having met with a refusal, he first made an ineffectual attempt to poison himself, and afterwards shewed himself as humble in adversity as he had been arrogant in the days of his prosperity. Having, on the 29th of March, signed his abdication, he, unconditionally, accepted the island of Elba, and some millions of yearly revenue for himself and his relations. It is worthy of remark, that, while the powers of Europe were deciding on the future destiny of the cruel enemy of Russia, who, but a short time before, had thought to throw back her frontiers to the Dnieper and the Dwina, his negociators from Fontainebleau addressed themselves to the Emperor, and to no other of the Allied Sovereigns, for whom His Majesty spoke and acted. We must leave it to history to decide the question which of the two is the greater object of wonder; Alexander, in spite of the numerous representations made to him, assuring the existence of Napoleon, or the latter receiving gifts at the hands of his rival. As soon as a provision was made for Napoleon and his family, their stay in France was no longer compatible with ~ circumstances. Their own safety required that they should retire beyond the frontiers. Almost all of them left Paris with Russian passports, and accompanied by the Emperor's aide-de-

camps. Napoleon was attended by Count Shuvàlof. It was the Emperor's first intention to send General Chernisheff to Fontainebleau, but he changed his mind, saying, that it would be unpleasant for Napoleon, in adversity, to see at his side one who had been with him in days when he was intoxicated with success. This trait, to which it would not be easy to find a parallel, proves how deeply Alexander was penetrated with the principle of shewing mercy to an enemy.

Count Shuvàlof had already been sent by the Emperor on a mission to the Empress Maria Louisa at Blois, whither, as we have seen, the majority of the ministers and dignitaries had retired. He was exceedingly well received by Her Majesty, and accompanied her to Orleans. On his way, the Empress and her attendants were alarmed by the sudden appearance of a detachment of General Chernisheff's Cossacks, who, seeing a long file of court equipages on the road, were about to dash at them, when they were stopped by Shuvàlof. On the arrival of the Empress at Orleans, certain intelligence was received of the change of government which had been effected at Paris. Napoleon's brothers and ministers now addressed themselves to our General for passports for Paris, and those places where they desired to reside. The Count complied with their requests ; and thus Napoleon's relations and ministers owed their safety, even while travelling in France, to papers given them by an aide-de-camp of Alexander. With respect to Napoleon himself, during his journey from Fontainebleau to the island of Elba, Count Shuvàlof had, on more than one occasion, an opportunity of saving him from the fury of the people. He who, not quite two years before, had given an

order to blow up the Kremlin, was obliged to save his life by putting on the cloak of a Russian general.

Although the new order of things established in France promised her peace and a mild government, there still remained many people attached to the cause of the discrowned hero. Some had owed him their places and honours, and others, for example, the purchasers of the confiscated domains of the nobility and the church, considered him as a pledge for the unmolested possession of their property : above all, the army regretted its idol. On this account, the kindness shown to Napoleon and his family by the Emperor, drew over to our side a host of his admirers, while our allies, by their evident coldness, kept them at a distance. Perhaps it may be said that Alexander's chief motive to act as he did, was vanity, and that on this occasion he paid the common tribute of great minds to a wish to secure an additional page in the history of the age, knowing, as he did, that his every action would go down to posterity. In refutation of such an opinion, I will cite a fact, which it was impossible to suppose would ever become public, from its utter insignificance compared with the mighty occurrences which were then every day taking place. It will serve to prove how foreign was revenge to Alexander's heart. The Emperor one day received the following letter from a Frenchwoman : " We have lost in Napoleon our benefactor, and, along with him, our means of existence. Although Your Majesty has waged war against him, the French are still able to appreciate your generosity. Relying on this general opinion, I have recourse to Your Majesty with a petition that you would furnish me with a sum of money sufficient to enable me to

reach Tuscany, and reside on the coast opposite to the isle of Elba. There I shall have in view the place where the man dwells, on whom my gaze has been and ever will be fixed." I received His Majesty's commands to find out the petitioner, who had not signed her name, and to furnish her with the money necessary for her journey.

During the discussions on the dethronement of Napoleon, the officers of his army began to arrive in Paris from Fontainebleau; but when his fate was decided, they crowded into the capital. As the peace was not yet signed, they did not know if their presence there would be tolerated, and therefore kept concealed, being afraid to show themselves abroad in uniform. As soon as the Emperor heard of this, he ordered the following advertisement to be published.

"Having learned that many French officers of all ranks are at this moment in Paris, either by reason of the present circumstances, or for the re-establishment of their health, which has suffered from fatigue or from wounds received in the field of honour, His Majesty cannot suppose they consider it necessary to conceal themselves. At all events, the Emperor has the pleasure to announce to them, that they are at perfect liberty, and that it is incumbent on them, as well as on the other citizens of France, to lend their aid to such measures as it is necessary to take for the happiness of their country."

It was as easy to recognize the French officers by their sombre countenances as by their uniforms. Making due allowance for the feelings of these men, it was impossible to expect that they would at once meet us with expressions of cordiality: it was only by degrees

that they could acknowledge, as the saviours of their country, an army with which they had long been fighting. Certain it is, however, that they conducted themselves more politely towards the Russians than to the other allies, with whom they had frequent quarrels which ended in duels. The Russians were the chief objects of their hatred, and hardly a day passed in which blood did not flow on one side or the other. The German officers, although the neighbours of the French, had more difficulty in conforming to their manners, customs, and language, than the Russians. At this time we received permission to wear plain clothes, in which we appeared in society as ordinary citizens. The Prussians and Austrians, on the contrary, continued to walk about in uniform. We may add, with perfect truth, that they did not try to adorn their triumph with modesty. The Austrians have a custom of wearing green branches in their caps and hats, which gave offence to the French, who thought they represented laurels; and hence resulted quarrels, and even murders. On the contrary, the Parisians were highly gratified by our wearing a white band round the left arm, and by our adding a white knot to our cockades. This apparently trifling circumstance turned the current of public opinion in our favour, and served as a bond of union between us; for the French almost without exception had resumed this colour, as a mark of their attachment to the Bourbons, and their wish for their restoration.

The Emperor having liberally rewarded the Russian officers, and those of the Allied Armies, bestowed marks of his favour on various Frenchmen holding commissions, especially on those who had charge of

our sick and wounded. By an Imperial order, money was sent to the parish priests for distribution among the necessitous. On one occasion, the French bankers sacrificed 8,000 francs in favour of our wounded, which they had gained by the exchange in Russian bank notes. His Majesty graciously acknowledging this offering, caused it to be divided into four parts, of which one was ordered to be given to the Russians, and the remainder to the Austrians, Prussians, and French. The money destined for the last, was sent by General Sacken to the minister at war, Dupont, with a letter which concluded with the following words : “I esteem myself happy in having been chosen by His Majesty to announce this act of his munificence to your countrymen, to whose valour I have been a witness on many occasions.” One of the memorable days we spent in Paris was Easter Sunday, on which prayers of thanksgiving were offered up on the *Place Louis XV.* An altar had been erected for the celebration of divine service on the spot where the last King of France had died the death of a martyr. At an early hour of a lovely morning, our troops were drawn up in the streets and squares which were crowded with an inconceivable mass of people. The Emperor, accompanied by many foreigners, among whom were several French Marshals and Generals, on reaching the place where service was being performed, knelt down on the spot where twenty years before had been shed the blood of a virtuous monarch. Prayer ever elevates the soul; but it filled us with indescribable feelings when in the midst of Paris we poured out the grateful offerings of our hearts to the Most High. This day was truly the day of triumph of Alexander’s

piety. Both in ancient and modern times have kingdoms been conquered, but never was seen an example before of a conqueror in the midst of a foreign capital, naming himself the mere instrument of Providence, and giving the glory of his success to God alone. When prayers were over, the roar of the Russian cannon resounded throughout Paris. The thunder of the artillery, contrasting so strikingly with the profound silence which had reigned during the prayers, went to the hearts of us all.

On the same day, His Majesty decorated his old tutor, Laharpe, with the blue ribbon of St. Andrew. The very day after the surrender of Paris, I was sent to his wife to announce to her in the name of the Emperor, that her husband was in safety at the Austrian head-quarters, and to offer her every assistance on the part of His Majesty, such as a guard to her country-house, or money if she needed it. I was further desired to tell her that His Majesty had not yet a moment to spare to visit her, but that he would lose no time in doing so. At Madame Laharpe's I found a large party, and when I had informed her of His Majesty's pleasure she burst into tears. "You see my tears," said she, "they are my answer."

After Easter His Majesty quitted Talleyrand's house, and took up his residence in the *Palais Élysée*. Soon afterwards arrived the Emperor Francis, who during Napoleon's advance on St. Dizier, had set off for the Austrian Army at Dijon, where he had remained ever since. On the day of his arrival, Alexander met him with the Russian troops in order of parade, and in honour of the Austrian Sovereign, gave for parole, *Vienna*, and for countersign, *Francis*.

The negotiations for peace now began, and Alexander conducted them in person. On the 11th April, the plenipotentiaries of the Allied Powers concluded, with the brother and Lieutenant of Louis XVIII., the preliminary treaty by which the same frontiers were assigned to France, which bounded that kingdom previous to 1792. The cabinet of the Tuilleries farther engaged to surrender fifty-two fortresses, still occupied by the French in Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, and on the shores of the Adriatic. The treaty was signed on the 18th May, when the firing of guns announced a new epoch to Europe.

The newspapers were at this time almost exclusively filled with articles about the Emperor Alexander; indeed it almost seemed as if Paris had ceased to think of the other allies. It would not be difficult to make up an extensive collection of interesting anecdotes from the daily papers, but I must limit myself to a few, for the truth of which I am able to vouch.

While riding through the Place Vendôme, where stood the lofty column surmounted with Napoleon's statue, the Emperor, in my hearing, said: "If I stood as high, I should be afraid of my head growing giddy."

One of the most curious articles ever published by the government of a conquered country is the following: "The public is informed by the police, that the monument on the *Place Vendôme* is under the protection of the magnanimity of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias and his allies. The sculpture on the summit cannot, under the present circumstances, remain where it is, for which reason it will be replaced by a statue of Peace." On this column, erected in honour of the victories gained by the French troops,

stood, as we have said, a statue of Napoleon, to which the mob had several times fastened a rope, and with fearful cries endeavoured to pull it down. One daring fellow got upon the shoulders of the statue, and slapped the face on both sides. That the statue was not destroyed, the Parisians owe it to the monarch in whose capital Napoleon conducted himself on very different principles. Russian soldiers mounted guard to preserve the monument of him, who had stained Russia with blood from the Niemen to Moscow.

At this time our allies by right of conquest selected and took away much of what the French had carried off from Germany and Italy. The Russians looked on as disinterested and indifferent spectators, for they had nothing to receive, having balanced accounts with the French while the latter were yet in the heart of Russia. Happening one day to be in the so called Napoleon museum, which contained inestimable treasures of art, I met the Emperor accompanied by the well known director-in-chief Denon. His Majesty observing that the statues were wanting on several of the pedestals, and pointing to one of the vacant spaces said: "What stood there formerly?" "The Apollo Belvidere," answered Denon. "Where is it now?" continued the Emperor. "As soon as Paris was threatened with danger," said Denon in a humble tone, "we sent it to Orleans." "If you had left it at Paris," replied Alexander, "I can assure you that nobody would have laid a finger on it; but now if the Cossacks should get hold of it, it will be their lawful prize."

The French, whose most celebrated writers had been preaching infidelity during a whole century,

were much astonished to observe the piety of the Emperor and the Russians. A generation reared in principles hostile to religion, which had seen it considered by the National Convention, by the Directory, and by Napoleon, as a thing of mere political expediency; an instrument, in short, employed for the attainment and preservation of power, could not be otherwise than astonished on seeing the piety of their conquerors openly displayed in word and action. The following extract is taken from one of the best French journals: "It is indeed a matter of astonishment to all, to see that the sovereigns of Europe, who would have been justified in avenging the many outrages they have suffered, and in demanding satisfaction of various kinds, appear among us as deliverers instead of the enemies and conquerors we dreaded. It may be asked what has turned aside the storm, which by our own fault was ready to burst over our heads, what has softened the hearts of these brave warriors? We must allow that it is religion which formed the sacred bond of their union for the benefit of mankind, and the emblems of which their troops wear on their garments. No human motive could have induced them to make sacrifices unparalleled in history."

"We listened," says another journalist, "to young Russian officers, on the very day of their triumphant entrance into Paris, who spoke of their exploits from Moscow to the Seine, as of deeds which had been accomplished under the immediate guidance of Divine Providence, and ascribing only to themselves the glory of having been chosen as

the instruments for the fulfilment of the Divine decrees. They spoke of their victories without exultation and in language so simple, that it seemed to us as if they did so by common consent out of politeness. They showed us a silver medal worn equally by their generals and private soldiers as a badge of distinction. On the one side is represented the eye of Providence, and on the other, these words from the scriptures: ‘Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name.’ ”

Our soldiers who were kept under the same subordination as in Russia, behaved in the most friendly manner towards the inhabitants of the towns and villages. In Paris, where there were none but picked troops, their stature, their simple way of living, and even their ignorance of the places whither the service had led them, all excited the curiosity of the French. One of the Parisian writers thus expresses himself on the subject of our camp. “The Elysian fields are frequented by crowds of Parisians who come to view the bivouacs of the horse regiments of the Russian guard, in which there are men of extraordinary stature and bodily strength; some of them would seem to be seven feet in height. It is really wonderful to see men and horses in such excellent order who have come from so distant a country, who have taken part in numerous battles and been exposed to the inclemency of a long and severe winter. The Parisians, accustomed to consider Bellville, Argenteuil and Meudon as the boundaries of the world, and to whom camps are only known by the descriptions of their sons, gaze with delight on the bivouacs in the middle of their

town. The remains of the hay which their horses have not eaten, compose the soldier's beds. Bundles of straw covering their lances, which are planted against trees, form a sort of roof, under which are sheltered the men and their effects. Before each bivouac are fires on which their food is cooked. Here you may see a soldier cutting up beef, another preparing firewood, and a third cleaning his arms, or asleep with a saddle for a pillow. Many of them listen with an air of pleasure to the remarks of the loungers on their customs, as if they understood them. We either do not at all understand their answers to our questions, or only partially from their gestures which display their kindly feelings and unaffected good understanding with us."

It must ever be impossible for us to forget the attentions we received from the Parisians, whose houses and hearts were equally open to the Russians. The appearance of our officers more than once excited public applause in the theatres, which resounded, especially in the first part of our stay, with shouts of "Long live the Russians!" The same thing happened in the coffee-houses where the people at first refused to take money from our countrymen. That the gratitude of the French to us was sincere, we had daily proofs; among others, I may mention that the inhabitants of many villages asked as a favour that our wounded officers and men might be quartered on them, in order that they might have an opportunity of giving them every assistance in their power. The Russians too owe acknowledgments to the Parisians in another respect: the courage and

constancy of Alexander, and the exploits of his troops were better appreciated by them than by any other foreigners.

It is easier to conceive than to describe the crowd the first time His Majesty visited the theatre. The piece appointed for the evening was the “Triumph of Trajan;” but shortly before the Emperor’s arrival the curtain rose, and it was announced, that His Majesty, having declined to receive, as his due, the praises with which the opera is filled, and which the French intended as a token of their gratitude, *La Vestale*, would be performed in its stead. The moment the Emperor appeared, the immense theatre seemed to shake with the thunder of applause, which continued more than a quarter of an hour, and was frequently repeated during the evening. Between the acts, the spectators were not satisfied with having the national air of “Vive Henri Quatre” played by the band, but called on a favourite actor to sing it. He came forward with a paper in his hand, and sang those verses in honour of Alexander, which soon after were sung all over Europe. On this occasion, *La Vestale* was performed by the best singers and dancers in Paris, and the boxes were filled with all the beauty of the capital. But, however much the ear and the eye were enchanted by the dancing and the music, I must own that my eyes frequently turned to two soldiers of the Pavlosk regiment of the guards, standing sentry, immoveable as statues, close by the curtain, and whose presence was perhaps the most curious part of the spectacle displayed on this evening at the opera.*

* The author is requested to pardon the translator for omitting his account of the Emperor’s reception by the members of the Institute, as

To a Russian, the campaign we have endeavoured to describe has a peculiar charm. He there sees his Sovereign struggling not only with the chances and changes of war, but with the conflicting opinions of his Allies, which too often threatened ruin to the best of causes, and contemplates, with feelings of profound admiration, his dignified self-possession, and his unflinching courage and constancy. With the exception of the year 1812, that palladium of Russian glory, where, more than in France, was a brighter lustre ever shed over the Russian arms,—a lustre equally bright in failure as in success? In describing Alexander's final struggle with Napoleon, I have spoken with impartiality of our victories and our failures. The latter are inevitable in war, and occur in almost every campaign; but if they are manfully supported in the face of a skilful enemy, they perhaps do an army greater honour than slight advantages gained over an inexperienced talentless opponent. If the most obstinate defence was to be expected, so were likewise alternations of success and failure, while we were fighting with him who had once aimed at universal monarchy, and who was now struggling to maintain his existence in France. Yet our partial failures are lost in the generality of those successes which opened the gates of Paris, laid the third part of France at the feet of the victors, and compelled Napoleon, in spite of his desperate resistance, to quit the scene.

well as the panegyrics pronounced by the Savans of Paris. The remarkable occurrences, during His Majesty's stay in the French capital, having been fully described by English pens, the public are already familiar with them. As for the laudatory addresses, they are so filled with fustian phrases, that to turn them into English would be a task equally difficult and useless.

From the arrangements which placed the Russians under the command of foreign generals, it might appear as if a secondary rank had been assigned to our countrymen. But we have seen, that whether owing to a concourse of circumstances, or by chance, they were always in the front of the battle. Wherever Napoleon turned, wherever he fell upon his enemies, there he was sure to find the Russians in the first ranks. On their broad shoulders lay the chief weight of the campaign, and with reason too ; for, in point of discipline, and real soldier-like bearing, they surpassed the troops of the other Powers, along with whom they fought. The Russian army, having been engaged in nine successive campaigns with the French, Turks, and Swedes, had become familiarized with war, in all its forms, in those brilliant campaigns, whose results were the conquest of Finland, Bessarabia, the expulsion of the French from Russia, and the deliverance of Germany. Trained to the endurance of privations of every kind, and accustomed to vanquish not only their enemies, but even nature herself, the Russians, in the course of these nine years, had triumphed beyond the Danube, at the gates of Stockholm, in the heart of their native country, and from the Niemen to the Rhine.

In our first campaigns against Napoleon, in Moravia and Prussia, the French were undoubtedly superior to us in skill and experience ; but, from the year 1812, their inferiority, in both respects, was evident to all. Had it been otherwise, could Osterman have stood his ground at Culm, Sackon at Brienne, Worontzoff at Craonne ? Could Chernisheff, with a flying detachment, have taken more than one hundred and thirty pieces of cannon, or Rudzévitch have carried Montmartre ? But

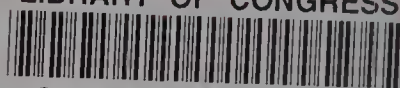
while we duly honour the names of those generals and the other upholders of Russian glory, let us not refuse the meed of praise to the heroic courage of the officers and men with whom it was possible to accomplish such feats ! We may here add, that from the year 1812, discipline and precision in the service of the front, as well as the commissariat, had visibly decayed in Napoleon's armies, while they daily advanced towards perfection in those of Alexander. The care bestowed by the latter, on these important objects, never slackened, while the former became every day more indifferent to the increasing disorders among his troops. To the Russian army, case-hardened in the fire of many combats, bearing easily the restraints of strict discipline, and filled with the warmest sentiments of duty to God and to their Sovereign, was reserved the chief parts in the campaign of France, in which the remains of Napoleon's legions were destroyed, and the deliverance of Europe achieved.

Various, complicated, and changing, as were the features of this memorable campaign, there was one which retained the same immutable character to the last ; I allude to Alexander's aim at Napoleon's overthrow. With all the firmness of purpose, engendered by a deep-rooted idea, paying no attention to the fears which haunted many of those around him, and despising the prejudices of his contemporaries, who considered Napoleon as invincible, he resolutely continued the struggle begun in 1812, conquered the first warrior of the age, and annihilated the mightiest man of modern times. The greatness of the Emperor consists, above all, in this, that, being filled with a sense of the justice and expediency of his policy, he so devoted the whole powers

of his mind, and the whole strength of his character, to carry it into effect, that his exertions led to the combined efforts of all legitimate thrones, in the common cause, and consequently to the consolidation of independent states, and the happiness of nations now flourishing under the shade of peace. Having gained his object, he proved himself to be fully penetrated with the conservative principles of order, and thus secured to himself an enduring moral influence, which is mightier than power, or, to speak more correctly, which is power itself.

THE END.

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